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SILENT PRAYER IN ANTIQUITY

PIETER W. VAN DER HORST

Summary

In antiquity prayers were said out loud and silent prayer was regarded as an anomalous practice that was looked upon with great suspicion. It was brought into connection with a variety of base motives which it was feared would be strongly objected to by others, foremost among which are wishes to practice magic, to have illicit sex, or to conceal crimes or criminal plans. It was also feared that one's prayer might be counteracted or undone by more powerful prayers of the opponents. It is only in circles of later (esp. Neo-)Platonism, in the framework of the increasing transcendentalisation in its concept of deity and the corresponding downgrading of anything material or corporeal, that complete silence as the purest form of worship was gradually accepted. This new trend had its influence on the Jewish philosopher Philo and especially on Churchfathers from Clement of Alexandria onwards (and also on some Hermetic and Gnostic circles). But in Jewish and Christian documents there was also another motive that facilitated a gradual acceptance of silent prayer as a respectable form of worship, namely, the biblical story (in 1 Samuel 1) about Hanna's inaudible prayer that was heard by God. It is the combination of these Platonic and biblical influences that brings about a change of attitude towards speechless prayer in both Judaism and Christianity, but the evidence clearly demonstrates that this was a very slow process, because the old suspicions surrounding this phenomenon did not easily disappear.

The ancients said their prayers out loud. There can be little doubt that throughout the ancient world the common practice was to say prayers in a way audible to other persons. The reason simply was that the anthropomorphic conception of the deities one prayed to implied that the gods had ears that worked in much the same way that human ears did. No sound implied no hearing. The representations of the large ears of gods in a number of reliefs,¹ the many prayers we know were directed specifically to the ears of a deity,² and the frequent references to θεοὶ ἐπήχοι (the gods who listen) in ancient literature and on monuments,³ are eloquent witnesses to this idea. The way prayers are usually mentioned in Greek and Latin literature is such that other people could hear what the pray-er was saying to the god.⁴ Nonetheless, from Homer onwards inaudible prayers are mentioned in ancient literature, and, however much

these may have been regarded as a deviation from normal practice, they do make clear that beside the more ‘primitive’ notion that gods could only hear prayers that were spoken out loud, there also existed the opinion that gods, or at least some gods, were able to hear inaudible prayers.

When silent prayer is mentioned, in most cases it is undeniably regarded as an anomaly, at least in Greek and Latin sources before the Christian period. As we shall see, in sources from the early Imperial period onwards things begin to change, and in Jewish and Christian sources we also find an increasingly different picture. We will survey the evidence, though not exhaustively, beginning with the pagan material, thereafter dealing with the Jewish and Christian sources from late antiquity.

Graeco-Roman evidence

In our sources we find several motives mentioned for the offering of silent prayer to a deity. In order to facilitate the presentation of the material, we will subdivide the evidence according to these different motives.⁵ Of course, apart from motives, there could be circumstances which made it physically impossible to say one’s prayer aloud. A clear instance of this is Homer, *Odyssey* V 444, where a tremendous wave has swept Odysseus far out to sea; struggling to the surface and trying to reach a river’s mouth, “he prayed in his heart (εὐξατο ὃν κατὰ θύμον) to the god of the stream”, obviously “because he could not speak it in the rough sea”.⁶ This is clearly something different than a motive to pray in silence.

The motive to pray without words or in an otherwise inaudible way so as to prevent enemies from hearing the prayer is first mentioned now, because this enables us to present here the earliest reference to the phenomenon, namely in Homer, *Iliad* VII 191-6; after Ajax has been appointed by lot to fight Hector he says: “My friends, the lot is mine, and I am delighted, for I think I shall defeat prince Hector. I only ask you, while I am arming for the fight, to pray to Zeus the royal son of Cronos. But let your prayers be silent (σιγῇ), so that the Trojans may not overhear you. Or pray aloud (ῆε καὶ ἀμφοδίην)! We are afraid of nobody whatever”. The great commentator Walter Leaf remarks *ad locum*: “The idea seems to be,

‘Do not let the Trojans hear your words, lest they endeavour to counteract your petitions by prayers of their own’; this he immediately revokes by the *καί* in 196, virtually = *nay*’.⁷ The motif that a prayer might be counteracted or undone by more powerful prayers of the opponents is indeed to be found more frequently. So we find in Euripides, *Electra* 803-810, where a messenger speaks to Electra: “Then your mother’s lover (Aegisthus) took barley and threw it on the altar with these words, ‘Nymphs of these rocks, I pray that many times both I and my dear wife at home may offer sacrifice with the same fortune we enjoy today; and may Evil oppress my enemies’. Then my master (Orestes) prayed to the contrary, without speaking aloud the words (οὐ γεγωνίσκων λόγους), that he might possess his father’s house again”. Here it is obvious that Aegisthus was not supposed to hear Orestes’ prayer which was meant to undo his. In Ovid’s *Tristia* I 1, 27-30, the author says that someone will read his poem in tears, and will pray silently, so that it will not be heard by a malevolent person (et tacitus secum, ne quis malus audiat, optet [v.29]) that the emperor will become more favourably disposed towards him (i.e., Ovid in exile). We may compare here a Jewish text, Judith 13:4: after having inebriated her arch-enemy, Holophernes, with liquor so that he has fallen asleep, “Judith, standing beside his bed, prayed in her heart: Oh Lord, etc.” (στᾶσα Ἰουδίθ παρὰ τὴν κλίνην αὐτοῦ εἶπεν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς· κύριε κτλ.; cf. 1 Sam. 1:13). The silence of her prayer is here motivated by the fact that the drunken Holophernes should not be awakened by her prayer before she would kill him.⁸ Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesiaca* IV 5, states that only when the heroine, Anthia, was *out of earshot* of one of her kidnappers who wanted to make love to her, she dared to exclaim: “I pray that I may remain the wife of Habrocomes, etc.”⁹

A second motive to be discerned is the malevolence of some supernatural powers, especially the Erinyes/Eumenides, who are not prayed to out loud, because mentioning their names (which was indispensable in ancient prayers) might evoke their noxious activities. Hence prayers to these goddesses were often soundless. In Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 1035 and 1039, in the final song of the chorus, the women sing: “Bless them [sc. the daughters of the night = Eumenides/Erinyes] with silence (εὐφραμεῖτε δέ)”. Cf. idem,

Choephoroi 95-6: (87 “What shall I say as I pour out these outpourings of sorrow?) Or shall I, without word or rite, in such fashion as my father was put away, pour out this offering for the ground to drink? (ἢ σῖγ’ ἀτίμως, ὥσπερ οὖν ἀπώλετο πατήρ, τάδ’ ἐκχέουσα γάποτον χύσιν κτλ.)”, the libation being here, of course, an offering to the chthonic Eumenides. Also Sophocles, *Oedipus Coloneus* 124-133: when the chorus sees Oedipus withdrawing into the sacred grove of the Eumenides, they say: “The old man must be a vagabond, not of our land, for he would never otherwise dare to go in there, in the inviolate thicket of those whom it is futile to fight, those whom we tremble to name, whom we pass averting our eyes, in silence, without conversation, shaping our prayers with our lips (ἄς τρέμομεν λέγειν, καὶ παραμειβόμεσθ’ ἀδέρκτως, ἀφώνως, ἀλόγως τὸ τᾶς εὐφάμου στόμα φροντίδος ἰέντες)”. Also *OC* 489, where the chorus teaches Oedipus how to pray to these goddesses, namely so “that the Eumenides, as we call them—which means the gentle of heart—may accept with gentleness the suppliant and his wish. So you, or he who prays for you, address them, but do not speak aloud or raise a cry (ἄπυστα φωνῶν μηδὲ μηχανύων βοήν)”. In this connection it should be mentioned that in Athens the priestesses of the chthonic *Semnai Theai* = Erinyes were called the Hesychides, the ‘Silent Ones’ (e.g. Callimachus, fr. 123).¹⁰

A third important motive to pray in silence was that the pray-er felt embarrassment about what he or she was going to pray for. When in Catullus 64, 103-4, Ariadne sees Theseus arriving at Crete, she feels her desire for him fired and for that reason she prays that he may be saved from the Minotaur: “Yet not without return or in vain were the gifts she promised to the gods when on her lips she kindled the silent breath of vows” (non ingrata tamen frustra munuscula divis/ promittens tacito succepit vota labello).¹¹ In Tibullus III 11 = IV 5, 17-20 we read: “The boy wants the same as me [namely, love or sex], but does not openly pour his heart out. He is too shy to say such things in public. But you, his birth-god, a god from whom nothing is hidden, hear our prayer. What does it matter whether he says it to himself or openly?” (optat idem iuvenis quod nos, sed tectius optat; nam pudet haec illum dicere verba palam. at tu, natalis, quoniam deus omnia sentis, adnue; quid refert, clamne palamne roget?). Cf. also Tibullus II 1,

84-6 “Call him [*i.e.*, Cupid] aloud to the flock, but in silence to yourselves—or even aloud to yourselves, for the din of the merry crowd and the skirl of the Phrygian pipe will drown the words” (voce palam pecori, clam sibi quisque vocet, aut etiam sibi quisque palam; nam turba iocosa obstrepit et Phrygia tibia curva sono); and III 12 = IV 6, 15-16 (about a mother who teaches her daughter on her birthday a fitting prayer to Iuno Natalis, but the girl has fallen into passion): “Her fond mother dictates the prayer she wants to pray, but the girl knows her own mind, and in the stillness of her heart utters quite a different prayer” (praecipit et natae mater studiosa quod optet: illa aliud tacita, iam sua, mente rogat). As a final example we mention Juvenal, *Satura* X 289-291: “When the loving mother passes the temple of Venus, she prays in whispered breath (modico ... murmure) for her boys that they may have beauty, but more loudly, and entering into the most trifling details, the same for her daughters”.¹²

In all the instances quoted we see that the reason for embarrassment is to be found in the fact that what is prayed for lies in the erotic or sexual sphere.¹³ Hence it is αἰδώς or *pudor*, a feeling of shame, that requires the prayer to be said in silence. “It is above all where love is concerned that man, even ancient man, confided his secrets to a god not to his neighbour”.¹⁴ In this connection it is interesting to notice that this almost certainly accounts for the existence of an “Aphrodite Psithuros, ‘the whisperer’, since it was customary to whisper prayers in her ear”.¹⁵ Seneca seems to refer to such a practice when he says at the end of *Epist.* X 5: “But I must, as is my custom, send a little gift along with this letter. It is a true saying which I found in Athenodorus: ‘Know that thou art freed from all desires when thou hast reached such a point that thou prayest to God for nothing except what thou canst pray for openly’. But how foolish men are now! They whisper the basest of prayers to heaven, but if anyone listens, they are silent at once. That which they are unwilling for men to know, they communicate to God. Do you not think, then, that some such wholesome advice as this could be given you: ‘Live among men as if God beheld you; speak with God as if men were listening’? Farewell!” (Sed ut more meo cum aliquo munusculo epistulam mittam, verum est quod apud Athenodorum inveni: “Tunc scito esse te omnibus cupiditatibus

solutum, cum eo perveneris, ut nihil deum roges nisi quod rogare possis palam” [fr. *de superstitione* 36].¹⁶ Nunc enim quanta dementia est hominum! Turpissima vota dis insussurant; si quis admoverit aurem, conticescent. Et quod scire hominem nolunt, deo narrant. Vide ergo, ne hoc praecipi salubriter possit: sic vive cum hominibus tamquam deus videbat; sic loquere cum deo tamquam homines audiant. Vale!).¹⁷

A fourth important motive for praying in silence, or at least inaudibly for other persons, is not so much the erotic or sexual nature of what is prayed for, but the otherwise unacceptable or even criminal character of the petition. As my countryman Henk Versnel remarked: “Now, there is nothing very attractive about wishing out loud in a temple *magna stante corona* that neighbour, rival or emperor should die as soon as possible. Yet this was a normal component of the various wishes expressed and in *such* cases it was customary to murmur the prayer between one’s lips or to say it in complete silence, so that the connection between silent prayer and evil became a *topos* in literature”.¹⁸ The well-known curses inscribed on the *defixionum tabellae* are very illustrative in this respect.

Let us here give some examples from literary sources. Martialis, *Epigr.* I 39, 5-6.8: “If anyone is the protector of what is right, an admirer of all that is honourable, and a man who asks nothing of the gods with inaudible voice, (...), damn me if it isn’t Decianus!” (si quis erit recti custos, mirator honesti/ et nihil arcano qui roget ore deos,/ (...) / dispeream si non hic Decianus erit).¹⁹ Horace, *Epist.* I 16, 57-62: “This ‘good man’, which the whole forum and tribunal looks at, whenever with swine or ox he makes atonement to the gods, cries with loud voice ‘Father Janus!’, with loud voice ‘Apollo!’, then moves only his lips, fearing to be heard: ‘Fair Laverna, grant me to escape detection, grant me to pass as just and upright, shroud my sins in night, my lies in clouds!’ ” (vir bonus, omne forum quem spectat et omne tribunal, quandocumque deos vel porco vel bove placat, “Iane pater!” clare, clare cum dixit “Apollo!”, labra movet metuens audiri: “Pulchra Laverna, da mihi fallere, da iusto santoque videri, noctem peccatis et fraudibus obice nebem”). Since Laverna is the goddess of theft,²⁰ the implication of Horace’s satirical picture is clear: it is only in an inaudible

way that one could say a prayer to the effect that one's misdeemeanours would not be discovered.²¹ In *De Benef.* VI 38, 1-5, Seneca complains that so many people pray in secret for the same thing (2: omnes enim idem volunt, id est, intra se optant), namely money or gain acquired in a dishonest way. In § 5 he continues: "Yet the prayers of all these men, while well known, are unpunished. Lastly, let every man examine himself, let him retire into the secrecy of his heart and discover what it is that he has silently prayed for. How many prayers there are which he blushes to acknowledge, even to himself! How few that we could make in the hearing of a witness!" (omnium tamen istorum tam nota sunt vota quam impunita; denique se quisque consulat et in secretum pectoris sui redeat et inspiciat quid tacitus optaverit. quam multa sunt vota quae etiam sibi fateri pudet! quam pauca quae facere coram teste possimus!). A final instance is Pliny, *Panegyricus* 67,5: "At your instigation, Caesar, the state has struck a bargain with the gods that they shall preserve your health and safety as long as you do the same for everyone else; otherwise they are to turn their attention from protecting your life, and to abandon you to such vows as are taken in secret" (teque relinquerent votis quae non palam susciperentur). Pliny implies that prayers for the health and safety of the emperor will be turned into their opposite when he does not keep to the agreement between himself and the Roman state. However, such prayers will then be uttered *non palam*.

But here we are already touching upon another motive for silent or murmured prayer, namely the practice of magic, black magic in most cases, which is most frequently mentioned in ancient sources as a reason for inaudible praying. There can be little doubt that it was the notorious character of magic in the view of most ancients that made practitioners hide the contents of their prayers, or rather curses and spells; hence these were often said either silently or in a low voice or murmur. It should be said here in advance that in the sources one finds an indiscriminate use of terms like *tacita prex* or *susurrus* (the sound made by one speaking in a low voice or a whisper) or *murmur*. It should be borne in mind here that *tacite*, 'silently', could not infrequently have the sense of 'in a quiet or low murmur'.²² For instance, Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI 203 and a scholion on Juvenal VI 587 speak about *tacitum murmur*, a very soft

(and hence inaudible) murmur. The emphasis is on the fact that what is being said in certain magical prayers cannot be heard in an articulate way by other persons. Most instances are found in Latin poets, presumably because in the early Empire magic began to flourish more than ever before.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII 251-4, writes about the magician Medea in Thessaly: "And when in long low-murmured supplications the deities were appeased, she bade bring out the old exhausted king, and with a spell charmed him to deepest sleep and lay his body, lifeless it seemed, stretched on a bed of herbs" (quos ubi placavit precibusque et murmure longo,/Aesonis effoetum proferri corpus ad auras/ iussit, et in plenos resolutum carmine somnos,/ exanimi similem stratis porrexit in herbis).²³ *Ibid.* IX 300-1: "She [the goddess of birth, Lucina] barred the birth [of Hercules with Alcmena] and chanted silent spells, spells that held back the birth as it began (sustinuit partus; tacita quoque carmina voce/ dixit, et inceptos tenuerunt carmina partus)".²⁴ *Ibid.* XIV 57-8 (on Circe): "Then only with her witch's lips she muttered thrice nine times a baffling maze of magic incantations" (... obscurum verborum ambage novorum/ter noviens carmen magico demurmurat ore).²⁵ Lucan, *Pharsalia* VI 699-701 (in a setting of magic): "I invoke ... the lowest form of our Hecate, through whom the shades and I may commune in silent utterance (mihi sunt tacitae commercia linguae)".²⁶ Horace, *Epode* V 49 (on a magician's spell): "What did she say, or rather what did she leave unsaid?" (quid dixit aut quid tacuit?), with a nice self-correction by Horace. Juvenal, *Satura* VI 539-541 (on Anubis): "His tears and carefully studied mutterings make sure that Osiris will not refuse a pardon for the fault, bribed, no doubt, by a fat goose and a slice of sacrificial cake" (illius lacrimae meditataque murmura praestant/ ut veniam culpae non abnuat, ansere magno/ scilicet et tenui popano corruptus Osiris). Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* II 28 (about an Egyptian magician who has been summoned to revive a dead body): "At this the prophet was moved, and took a certain herb, and laid it three times upon the mouth of the dead, and he took another and laid it upon his breast in like sort. Then he turned himself to the East and made silently certain prayers to the proud and rising sun, which caused all the people to marvel greatly at the sight of this solemn act and to look

for the strange miracle that should happen” (propheta sic propitiatus herbulam quampiam ob os corporis et aliam pectori eius imponit. tunc orientem obversus incrementa solis augusti tacitus imprecatus venerabilis scaenae facie studia praesentium ad miraculum tantum certatim adrexit).²⁷ In his *Apologia* 54,7 Apuleius, who has been accused of magical practices, makes fun of unfounded accusations of magic: “Did you say silent prayers to the gods in the temple? Then you are a magician!” (Tacitas preces in templo deis allegasti: igitur magus es!).²⁸ Lucian, *Menippus* 7: a Chaldaean brings Menippus down to visit the underworld; during the trip plenty of use is made of incantations: “He spoke rapidly and indistinctly. It is likely, however, that he was invoking certain spirits ... murmuring his incantations” (ἐπίτροχόν τι καὶ ἀσαφές ἐφθέγγετο. πλὴν ἐφκει γέ τινας ἐπικαλεῖσθαι δαίμονας ... τὴν ἐπωδὴν ὑποτονθορύσας). Achilles Tatius II 7: “She moved closer and put her mouth near mine in order to mumble her charm over the wound; she whispered the formula (ἐψιθύριζεν)...”. And in the great magical papyrus from Paris (PGM IV) we read in lines 744-6 that the magician has to say the spell over someone’s head “with a weak voice (ἀτόνῳ φθόγγῳ) so that he may not hear it”.²⁹ As late as the sixth century CE the anonymous Christian author of the so-called *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum* remarks on the *magoi* in Mt. 2: “Dicebantur Magi lingua eorum, quia in silentio et voce tacita Deum glorificabant. (...) laudabant in silentio Deum tribus diebus”! (MG 56, 637).³⁰

Finally, a completely new motive to say prayers without words evolved hand in hand with a change in the conception of the nature of deity. It was of course in philosophical circles that this change took its point of departure. Now it should be said beforehand that there had always been Greeks and Romans who believed that gods could hear prayers without words. In Sophocles, *Electra* 655-8, Clytemnaestra says: “These are my prayers, Lycaean Apollo, hear them graciously. Grant to all of us what we ask. For all the rest, although I am silent, I know you are a God and know it all” (ταῦτ’, ὦ Λύκει’ Ἀπολλων, ἴλεως κλύων / δὸς πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ἐξαιτοῦμεθα. / τὰ δ’ ἄλλα πάντα καὶ σιωπῶσης ἐμοῦ / ἐπαξιῶ σε δαίμον’ ὄντ’ ἐξειδέναι). And Cicero, *De Divinatione* I 129, says that “the minds of the gods, without eyes, ears or tongue are mutually aware of

what any of them feels or thinks, so that men, even when they wish or vow something silently, have no doubt of being heard'' (deorum animi sine oculis, sine auribus, sine lingua sentiunt inter se quid quisque sentiat, ex quo fit ut homines, etiam cum taciti optent quid aut voveant, non dubitent quin di illud exaudiant). And some more passages in this vein could be quoted.³¹ But it should be added that this was probably not a widespread belief.

It was mainly the later Platonists, with their ever more elevated conception of the purely immaterial, noetic divine world and especially their *theologia negativa*,³² which gave a decisive impulse to the new concept of silent prayer as the only fitting means of worshipping God. To a lesser extent also the Stoics, with their concept of the deity as permeating not only the whole cosmos but also all human beings, contributed to this process. As to the Stoic view, there is the hackneyed quotation from Seneca, *Epistula* XLI 1: "We do not need to uplift our hands towards heaven, or to beg the keeper of a temple to let us approach his idol's ear, as if in this way our prayers are more likely to be heard. God is near you, he is with you, he is within you" (non sunt ad caelum elevandae manus nec exorandus aedituus, ut nos ad aurem simulacri, quasi magis exaudiri possimus, admittat; prope est a te deus, tecum est, intus est). Communing with a god who is within you can be accomplished without words, say the Stoics.

But it is the Platonic view that turned out to be of a much more lasting influence. The clearest expression can be found in the writings of the Neoplatonists,³³ to begin with Plotinus, *Ennead* V 1,6: "We first invoke God himself, not in loud word, but in that way of prayer which is always within our power, leaning in soul towards Him by aspiration, alone towards the alone" (θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐπικαλεσαμένοις οὐ λόγῳ γεγωνῶ, ἀλλὰ τῇ ψυχῇ ἐκτεínaσιν ἑαυτοὺς εἰς εὐχὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνον, εὐχέσθαι τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον δυναμένους μόνους πρὸς μόνον). Plotinus' pupil Porphyry says in his *De abstinentia* II 34,2: "Let us sacrifice in such a manner as is fit, offering different sacrifices to different powers; to the God who is above all things, as a certain wise man said, neither sacrificing nor consecrating anything that belongs to the world of the senses. For there is nothing material which is not immediately impure to an immaterial nature. Hence neither is vocal language nor internal speech

adapted to the highest god, when it is defiled by any passion of the soul; but we should venerate him in profound silence with a pure soul and with pure conceptions about him” (Θεῶ μὲν τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι, ὥς τις ἀνὴρ σοφὸς ἔφη, μηδὲν τῶν αἰσθητῶν μήτε θυμιῶντες μήτε ἐπονομάζοντες· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἔνυλον ὃ μὴ τῷ ἄϋλῳ εὐθύς ἐστὶν ἀκάθαρτον. Διὸ οὐδὲ λόγος τούτῳ ὁ κατὰ φωνὴν οἰκεῖος, οὐδ’ ὁ ἔνδον, ὅταν πάθει ψυχῆς ἢ μεμολυσμένος· διὰ δὲ σιγῆς καθαρᾶς καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ καθαρῶν ἐννοιῶν θρησκειούμεν αὐτόν). There can be little doubt that the ‘certain wise man’ here is the first century philosopher and miracle-worker Apollonius from Thyana, whose well-known ideas on spiritual sacrifice (in his *Περὶ θυσιῶν*) would seem to be extrapolated here by Porphyry to prayer.³⁴ In *Ad Marcellam* 16 Porphyry states that a sage honours god by his silence (σοφὸς γὰρ ἀνὴρ καὶ σιγῶν θεὸν τιμᾷ (cf. *Ep. ad Aneb.* 5)).³⁵ He also quotes an oracle of Apollo to the effect that the gods have to be called upon with “ineffable callings” (κλήσεσιν ἀφθέγκτοις, in his *De philosophia ex oraculis haurienda*, ap. Eusebius, *PE* V 14, 1). Iamblichus claims in *De Mysteriis* VIII 3 that he is rendering ancient Egyptian wisdom according to the earliest records by ‘Hermes’ on the proper worship of the highest principle, the god of gods, “which can be worshipped by silence only” (ὃ δὴ καὶ διὰ σιγῆς μόνης θεραπεύεται). And the late Neoplatonic author Proclus also emphasizes that only by completely silencing our whole body may we gain knowledge of the gods (τότε τὰ φθέγματα αὐτῶν διὰ νοῦ γνωσόμεθα μόνως, ὅταν σιγῇσωμεν πάσαις ἡμῶν ταῖς σωματικαῖς αἰσθήσεσιν, *In remp.* II 243, 24 Kroll).³⁶ The same conception can also be found in the Hermetic literature, e.g. in *Corpus Hermeticum* I (*Poimandres*) 30-31 we read in a context of worship of the highest god: ἡ σιωπὴ μου ἐγκύμων τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ‘my silence was pregnant of good things’; and the deity is called upon as “the ineffable, the unspeakable, the one who can only be called upon by silence” (ἀνεκλάλητε, ἄρρητε, σιωπῇ φωνούμενε).³⁷ In *CH* X 5 the beauty of the Good One is incomprehensible (ἄληπτον), a human being can say nothing about it, because the *gnosis* of it is a divine silence (θεία σιωπή). The unknown God is unknowable, but reveals himself in a contemplative silence.³⁸ It is clear that the idea of God as pure *nous* and *nooumenon*, whose worship hence can only be carried out in a purely noetical, that is incorporeal, way, inevitably leads to a worship in total silence.³⁹

We cannot expatiate here on the role and importance of silence in Gnosticism (it falls outside my sphere of competence and interest),⁴⁰ but it may be noted that it is significant that in some Nag Hammadi texts the aeon Sophia is even identified with (the hypostasized) Sige (e.g. *NHC* III 3, 88, 8-9) and that the heavenly ‘masculine female virgin Ioel’ is called “the silence of silent silence” (*NHC* IV 2, 55, 18).⁴¹ (And cf. also Irenaeus, *Adv. Haereses* I 11, 5 on Sige as a divine being among the Gnostics). That a divine being called ‘Silence’ will have been worshipped in silence stands to reason. Now although Platonic influence on various gnostic systems seems undeniable, we certainly need not attribute the importance of silence among the Gnostics to that philosophy alone. There were probably other factors at work here as well, which may derive from the Jewish and Christian traditions. This leads us to the second section of our material, namely the Jewish and Christian evidence.

Jewish evidence

Although in these two monotheistic religions audible prayer was also the predominant custom, certainly initially, there were right from the start some elements that made for a significant difference. For Judaism the most important factor simply was that in the Bible there was a story about someone praying in silence who, although being frowned upon by Eli the priest, was heard favourably by God. This story is of course the narrative about Hanna in 1 Sam. 1. There Hanna, one of the two wives of Elkana, prays in the temple at Silo in a mood of despair because she had remained childless so far, in contrast to the other wife of Elkana. As she continued praying, so the biblical text says, “Eli observed her mouth: Hanna was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk” (1 Sam. 1:12-13 LXX και ἐγένηθη ὅτε ἐπλήθυνεν προσευχομένη ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ Ἡλὶ ὁ ἱερεὺς ἐφύλαξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτῆς. (13) καὶ αὐτὴ ἐλάλει ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῆς ἐκινεῖτο καὶ φῶνὴ αὐτῆς οὐκ ἤκούετο. καὶ ἐλογίσατο αὐτὴν Ἡλὶ εἰς μεθύουσιν). But her prayer that God would bless her with a child was heard, which implied that her words not only were understood by God but also found favour in God’s eyes. It is not surpris-

ing that, even though this is the only story in the Bible that speaks about silent prayer, this was bound to exert its influence in Jewish prayer practice.

The first post-biblical Jewish author to mention silent prayer was the philosopher-exegete Philo of Alexandria. Although he does not reflect on this biblical text, he does speak in a very positive sense about silent prayer, but this is most probably due to his being so deeply steeped in Platonic ideas about God. In *De plantatione Noe* 126 Philo says: “[Gratitude to God] must be expressed by means of hymns of praise, and these not such as the audible voice will sing (οὐχ οὕς ἡ γεγωνὸς ἔσεται φωνή), but strains raised and re-echoed by the mind too pure for the eye to discern”, a phraseology more reminiscent of the just quoted Hermetic and Neoplatonic passages than of 1 Sam. 1. But in *De specialibus legibus* I 272: “[The worshippers] honour with hymns and thanksgivings their benefactor and saviour, God, sometimes with the organs of speech, sometimes without tongue or mouth (ἄνευ γλώττης καὶ στόματος), when within the soul alone their minds recite the tale or utter the cry of praise”, the words “without tongue or lips” are more reminiscent of the words in 1 Sam. 1, which makes one wonder whether perhaps here Plato does meet Samuel, so to speak. But when in *De gigantibus* 52 Philo writes that we have to contemplate to the Existent (τὸ ὄν) without speech and within the soul alone (ἄνευ φωνῆς μόνῃ ψυχῇ), the terminology is so much like what we find in the later Platonists that one suspects that ‘Plato’ was a stronger influence on Philo than ‘Samuel’, here as well as elsewhere. Although Philo should have been rather dealt with in the paragraph on Platonism, we treat him as a Jewish writer because that may help us understand why and how in early Christianity, on which Philo had such a great influence,⁴² it was also this combination of biblical and Platonic elements that facilitated the acceptance and propagation of silent prayer.

Pseudo-Philo, however, does reflect on our biblical passage in his *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 50:5, where he rewrites the story of Hanna and Elkana: “And Hanna did not want to pray out loud as all people do; for she thought saying: ‘Perhaps I am not worthy to be heard, and Peninnah will then be even more eager to taunt me, ...’ ” (et noluit Anna orare clara voce sicut omnes homines. tunc

enim cogitavit dicens: ne forte non sim digna exaudiri et erit ut plus me zelans improperet mihi Fehenna). Although the author is aware of the deviation from common practice (*as all people do*), he tries to give us a glimpse into Hanna's mind so as to enable us to understand her complete departure from common prayer practice. It was fear to be even more taunted by her rival than before, if her prayer would have no effect, that makes her pray in silence. Respectable motives will recur in other Jewish reflections on our passage.

It is harder to discover what was the motive behind the passage in the Greek *Vita Adae et Evae* 29:7, where at least a number of manuscripts state that Adam after his expulsion from Paradise says to Eve: "Cry in silence to God: Oh God, have mercy on me!" (σιγῶσα βόησον τῷ θεῷ· ὁ θεός, ἰλάσθητί μοι), which is clarified in the Latin version as follows (6:2): "Let no speech come out of your mouth, because we are unworthy to entreat the Lord since our lips are unclean from the illegal and forbidden tree". Here at least the second quotation makes clear that uncleanness of lips because of the eating of the forbidden fruit is a reason either to pray not at all or to pray in silence; but it has to be added that both versions taken on their own are much less clear than taken together.

Josephus tells in *Bellum* III 353-4 that shortly before his surrender to the Romans he is hiding from the Romans with 40 revolutionary notables from Jotapata. "Recalling the dreadful images of recent dreams, he offered up a silent prayer to God (προσφέρει τῷ θεῷ λεληθυῖαν εὐχὴν). 'Since it pleases thee', so it ran, 'who didst create the Jewish nation, to break thy work, since fortune has wholly passed to the Romans, and since thou hast made choice of my spirit to announce the things that are to come, I willingly surrender to the Romans and consent to live; but I take thee to witness that I go, not as a traitor, but as thy minister'." Much has been said about this embarrassing passage, but for our purposes the relevant aspect is that here we have simply another instance of fear of being heard by others who certainly would have viewed him as a traitor.

When we now turn to rabbinic literature, we see that there is a relative scarcity of evidence when we compare it to the enormous bulk of early rabbinic literature as a whole and to the numerous pages devoted therein to prayers said out loud. We find some brief remarks on silent prayer in the Mishna and Talmud treatise

Berakhot, as was to be expected, and a couple of references elsewhere.⁴³ Nonetheless they are revealing. Let us begin with the earliest testimony, Mishna *Berakhot* III 4-5, where we read: “One who has had a seminal discharge recites (the *Shema*) silently” (lit.: he ponders over it in his heart); he should altogether refrain from the blessings before and after the *Shema*; and should he have already started to recite the *Tefillah* (= the Eighteen Benedictions) but remembered that he had had a seminal emission, he should not stop the prayer but shorten it. The point here is that reciting the *Shema* is not praying in the proper sense, because it actually is ‘reading’ of Scripture,⁴⁴ so the man who is unclean (because of his seminal emission) may recite the *Shema*, albeit silently, but because he is unfit for immediate contact with the deity, he may not recite *berakhot*, the prayers of blessing; and although he may go on with the *Tefillah* when he remembers too late that he is impure because of a seminal emission, he should absolutely shorten the prayer; breaking it off would be an offence to the deity, but he should beware of staying too long in direct contact with the divine sphere and therefore abbreviate his prayer (by taking recourse to a shortened version of the prayer, *tefillah qetsirah*). However, the Mishna also explicitly states that not all rabbis were of the same opinion: Rabbi Judah said that such a man was allowed to say all prayers!⁴⁵

We now take a short glance at the Gemara, that is the discussion of this Mishna passage by the Babylonian rabbis of the third through sixth centuries in the Babylonian Talmud (Bavli). In Bavli *Berakhot* 20b-21a one sees that the mishnaic passage elicits a debate: Rabina says that it demonstrates that silent recitation is equivalent to reciting aloud; otherwise why should he say *Shema* in silence? But Rav Hisda combats this view: The two are not equivalent, otherwise why not let him utter the words, with his lips? And so it goes on about the *Shema*. But then the rabbis switch to the Eighteen Benedictions, *Tefillah*. “*Tefillah* is different because it does not mention the kingdom of heaven” (21a). What does this mean? In the Eighteen Benedictions the address *melekh ha‘olam*, ‘King of the Universe’, does not occur, and that is the reason why, in contradistinction to the other *berakhot*, this one can be said to the end when a man suddenly remembers his seminal emission, although

he should keep it as brief as possible out of reverence. A *baraita* in *Berakhot* 31a teaches that Rabbi Akiva frequently indulged in silent prayer in the synagogue, so great was his concentration (*kawwanah*); and in this connection the rabbis refer to Hanna's example in 1 Sam. 1:13 and add that Solomon's request in 1 Kings 8:28, "Attend, o Lord my God, to the prayer and the supplication of thy servant, listen to the cry and the prayer which your servant makes before you this day", demonstrates that there is a difference between an official prayer (said out loud) and a supplication (said in silence). Bavli *Sotah* 32b is a beautiful passage in that it suggests as a motif of silent prayer the desirability to prevent transgressors from being put to shame: if a person recites the Eighteen Benedictions aloud, the sinner who confesses his/her sins in the course of prayer, will be put to shame, and therefore it is better that the prayer be said softly. One is reminded of Luke 18:9-14 where the publican is put to shame by the Pharisee in a situation of prayer said out loud.⁴⁶

Let me finally refer to some passages in the *Midrash on Psalms*. In IV 9 we read: "The Holy One, blessed be He, declared to Israel: I say unto you: When you would pray, go to the synagogue in your city; when you cannot go to the synagogue in your city, pray in your open field; when you cannot go to your open field, pray in your house; when you cannot go to your house, pray upon your bed; when you cannot pray aloud on your bed, commune with your heart. Hence it is written: Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still (Ps. 4:5)". And in XIX 2 silence is called "the height of all praises of God".⁴⁷

Christian evidence

Finally the Christian material, in which we see various threads coming together. It was the great commentator of Cicero, Arthur Stanley Pease, who once suggested that the fact that silent prayers were far more generally employed in Christian usage was perhaps due to the influence of such passages as Matth. 6:6.⁴⁸ In this passage of the Sermon on the Mount we read that Jesus said by way of instruction for prayer: "When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father in secret, and your Father

who sees in secret will reward you''. The context makes clear beyond any doubt that this is a warning against ostentatious prayer, but is it an encouragement of silent prayer? Does praying not in the street but in the privacy of one's own room imply praying in silence? The point would rather seem to be this: "Prayer is for God alone; it requires no human audience. The soul in prayer must be turned only towards God".⁴⁹ The fact that one should withdraw to a place where one is alone would rather seem to suggest that one should look for a place where one's prayers, spoken out loud, cannot be heard by others. So although I am not inclined to follow A.S. Pease in his interpretation of Matth. 6:6, what Jesus says a couple of lines further, "your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (6:8), may indeed suggest that God has no need of human words in order to know what is in their hearts, which is a well-known motif from biblical and post-biblical Jewish sources.⁵⁰ Even though this still is definitely not identical to a command to say prayers silently, it is conceivable that such elements in the gospel tradition have facilitated the acceptance of silent prayer as a respectable way of communicating with God. In addition to that, another New Testament injunction, namely Paul's exhortation to pray constantly (1 Thess. 5:17) cannot have been meant and understood otherwise than that the believers should be with their hearts in continuous contact with God, not that they should say prayers out loud all day. It should be conceded, however, to Pease (although he is not aware of it), that in the exegesis of some of the Church Fathers it is indeed Matt. 6:6 that is used to encourage praying in silence.

The impact of Platonism on Christian views of prayer is discernible in the earliest Christian writer to discuss silent prayer, Clement of Alexandria. In his *Stromateis* he devotes a whole chapter (VII 7) to the questions of what sort of prayer the real believer should employ and how it is heard by God. Some quotations may suffice: VII 7, 37, 1 "God does not possess human form in order to hear, nor does he need senses, as the Stoics think, 'especially hearing and sight, for otherwise he could never perceive something' ". VII 7, 37, 3 "And should anyone say that the voice does not reach God, but is rolled downwards in the air, yet the thoughts of the saints cleave not only the air but the whole world". VII 7, 37, 5 "And what voice should he wait for, he who, according to his purpose,

knows the elect already before his birth, and knows what is still to be as already existent?" VII 7, 39, 6 "Prayer is then, to speak more boldly, converse with God. Though whispering, consequently, and not opening the lips we speak in silence, yet we cry inwardly. For God hears continually all the inward converse". VII 7, 43, 4 "God does not wait for loquacious tongues, as interpreters among men, but knows absolutely the thoughts of all; and what the voice intimates to us, that is what our thought, which even before the creation He knew would come into our mind, speaks to God. Prayer, then, may be uttered without the voice".⁵¹ It is clear that it is not only philosophical motives but also the biblical and Jewish-Christian idea that God knows the thoughts of all men that plays a role here.

From about the same period is the passage in the apocryphal *Acta Petri* 39 (= *Martyrium Petri* 10), where Peter has been crucified and from the cross he utters a prayer that contains the following passage: "Now whereas thou hast made known and revealed these things unto me, O word of life, called now by me wood [or: word called now by me tree of life], I give thee thanks, not with these lips that are nailed unto the cross, nor with this tongue by which truth and falsehood issue forth, nor with this word which cometh forth by means of art whose nature is material, but with that voice do I give thee thanks, O King, which is perceived in silence (διὰ σιγῆς νοουμένη), which is not heard openly, which proceedeth not forth by organs of the body, which goes not into ears of flesh, which is not heard of corruptible substance, which existeth not in the world, neither is sent forth upon earth, nor written in books, which is owned by one but not by another; but with this, O Jesus Christ, do I give thee thanks, with the silence of a voice (σιγῇ φωνῆς), wherewith the spirit that is in me loveth thee, speaketh unto thee, seeth thee, and beseecheth thee".⁵² And also in the same period Tertullian (*De oratione* 17,3-4) and some decades later Cyprian (*De dominica oratione* 4-5) stress that God does not so much listen to the voice as to the heart of men: Deus autem non vocis sed cordis auditor est. But it is interesting to see that Tertullian, in order to prove that God can not only see into the hearts of men but also hear their thoughts, refers first to a pagan oracle of Apollo which says that the god understands the mute and hears the one who does not

speak,⁵³ and only then to a biblical example (namely the example of Jona's prayer from the belly of the whale), whereas Cyprian instead first refers to Matth. 6:6 and then to 1 Sam 1, Hanna's example, to drive home the necessity of silent prayer.⁵⁴ All this was written by them of course because silent prayer was *not*, or at least not commonly, practised among their co-religionists. This is also evident from a passage in Hippolytus' treatise *The Apostolic Tradition*, where he says: "If you are at home, pray at the third hour and praise God; but if you are elsewhere and that moment comes, pray then in your heart to God" (36:2, p. 62-3 ed. G. Dix). Here, of course, also the motive not to provoke inimical gentiles plays a role.

That the biblical example of Hanna was not forgotten is clear again from a passage in Cyril of Jerusalem, *Procatechesis* 14 (from the middle of the 4th cent.): the catechumens are waiting for the individual prebaptismal exorcisms to be finished. The men are to sit together reading aloud or praying. "But let the young women's group gather in such a way that, whether it is praying psalms or reading in silence, their lips move but the ears of others do not hear. 'For I do not permit a woman to speak in church' [1 Cor. 14:34, quoted freely]. And let the married woman do likewise, and let her pray and move her lips, but let no sound be heard (καὶ προσευχέσθω, καὶ τὰ χεῖλη κινείσθω, φωνὴ δὲ μὴ ἀκούεσθω), so that Samuel may come, so that your barren soul may give birth to the salvation of God who hears you; for that is what Samuel means".⁵⁵ The interesting thing in this passage is that Hanna's example is here used (or misused) to enforce the implementation of the apostle Paul's injunction that women should be silent in the church (contrast Origen's use of the story of Hanna in *De oratione* 13). In his exposition of Matth. 6:6 (the text discussed above), Jerome says that on the face of it this verse seems to prohibit only vainglorious praying, but there is more to it: it rather prescribes that one should pray with closed lips, in the heart, just like Hanna did, as we read in the book of Kings (sed mihi videtur magis esse praeceptum ut inclusa pectoris cogitatione labiisque compressis oremus Dominum, quod et Annam in Regum volumine fecisse legimus, *In Mattheum* I, ad 6:6).

Another factor in the Christian development of praying in silence may have been that in and after the fourth century the ideal of

silence in the early monasteries must have contributed to an atmosphere in which praying silently became more and more acceptable. John Cassian (early fifth cent.), in his *Conlatio* IX 35, says that monks should pray in complete silence (*clauso oramus ostio, cum strictis labiis silentio supplicamus non vocum sed cordium scrutatori. ...cum summo est orandum silentio*) because otherwise one disturbs others in their prayers (*ne fratres adstantes nostris susurris vel clamoribus avocemus et orantium sensibus obstreparamus*) and one should also see to it that 'our enemies' (here probably the demons)⁵⁶ do not get to know what we are praying (*ut ipsos quoque inimicos nostros, qui orantibus nobis maxime insidiantur, lateat nostrae petitionis intentio*). Pure prayer can only be conducted in silence.⁵⁷ And another monk, Evagrius Ponticus, argues in his *De oratione* that prayer is the complete expulsion of all thoughts, and glorifies the ideal of silent, even unconscious prayer.⁵⁸

But nonetheless one does not at all get the impression that silent private prayer quickly and easily made itself the usual pattern of prayer behaviour in Christian antiquity. In the third century *Apostolic Constitutions* it is said with some wonder in one of the prayers in the 7th book that God is "the one who even knows the petitions which are kept silent (*ὁ καὶ σιωπωμένας ἐπιστάμενος ἐντεύξεις*, VII 33, 2)", as if that was something unheard of. It is also striking that a Christian Platonist like Origen throughout his treatise *On Prayer* takes for granted that prayers were spoken out loud.⁵⁹ In *De Civitate Dei* XXII 8 Augustine tells us a story which definitely conveys the impression that praying aloud was still customary while praying 'in the heart' was exceptional. It is only in the early decades of the 5th century that we find the first explicit prescription to pray silently, in John Cassian, but that is meant for monks only. The fact that in the first half of the 6th century the Justinian *Novella* 137:6 orders the prayers in the administration of the sacraments to be uttered not silently but in such a way that the congregation can hear them, makes one wonder whether the old suspicion of magic where prayers were being said silently still lingered on in that time.⁶⁰

To summarize, in pagan antiquity about the turn of the era silent prayer, in spite of all the negative connotations it had always had,

was gaining recognition as a legitimate form of worship, albeit primarily in philosophically influenced circles. This new trend combined in ancient Judaism and early Christianity with other (partly biblical) motives which facilitated the acceptance of this relatively uncommon phenomenon, but it lasted till the early Middle Ages until it had become accepted in the Church at large, probably because the ancient suspicions surrounding this phenomenon did not easily disappear.

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¹ See e.g. F.T. van Straten, Gifts for the Gods, in H.S. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship. Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, Leiden 1981, 83 with figs. 11 and 12.

² See H.S. Versnel, Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer, *ibid.* 36.

³ Here the great essay by O. Weinreich, Θεοὶ ἐπήκοοι, *Athenische Mitteilungen* 37 (1912) 19ff., is still fundamental. See also A.D. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, Oxford 1972, I 421f.

⁴ H. Schmidt, *Veteres philosophi quomodo iudicaverunt de precibus* (RGVV 4,1), Gießen 1907, 55-71 (De precationibus aut tacitis aut clara voce prolatis); S. Sudhaus, Lautes und leises Beten, *ARW* 9 (1906), 185-200, esp. 188-190; O. Kern, *Die Religion der Griechen* I, Berlin 1926, 151; A.S. Pease (ed.), *M. Tulli Ciceronis de divinatione libri duo*, Darmstadt 1963, ad I 129; E. von Severus, Gebet, *RAC* 8 (1972) 1134-1258; W. Fauth, Gebet, *KP* 2 (1975) 708-710; H. Wagenvoort, Orare, precari, in his *Pietas. Selected Studies in Roman Religion*, Leiden 1980, 197-209. The old but classic study by F. Heiler, *Das Gebet*, München 1921³, is still valuable for its observations on Greek and Roman prayers.

⁵ See H. Braune, Περὶ εὐχῆς. *Veterum de precibus sententiae*, diss. Marburg 1935, 18-19, for a different subdivision.

⁶ W.B. Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer* I, London 1959², 306. A scholion *ad locum* says: οἰκτεῖον γὰρ τῷ νηχομένῳ μὴ φθέγγεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τῷ λογισμῷ τὴν εὐχὴν ἐκφέρειν.

⁷ W. Leaf, *The Iliad*, I, Amsterdam 1960 (= London 1900), 312. A scholion *ad locum* says: ἵνα μὴ δόξωσιν ἐπ' εὐχὰς τρέπεσθαι τὸν Ἑκτορα δεδοικότες.

⁸ Sudhaus, Lautes und leises Beten 194, also points to the addition to prayers in the *Tabulae Iguvinae* containing the words *tases persnimo sevom*, which is Umbrian for *tacitus precamino totum*: "Denn es besteht die Gefahr, daß Feinde und Widersacher das Gebet erfahren, das der Stadt Segen und Wohlfahrt gewährleistet. Sie könnten seine Wirkung durch einen stärkeren Zauber brechen".

⁹ Note that in the eighties of the 4th cent. CE the pagan rhetorician Libanius rather wryly remarks at the address of the Christian emperor Theodosius I: "You could have issued an edict, Sire: Let none of my subjects revere or honour the gods, or invoke them for any blessing either for himself or for his children, save

in silence and in secret'' (ἦν σοι, βασιλεῦ, κηρύξαι· μηδεὶς τῶν ὑπ' ἐμοὶ νομιζέτω θεοὺς μηδὲ τιμάτων μηδὲ αἰτεῖτω τι παρ' αὐτῶν μήθ' ἑαυτῷ μήτε παισὶν ἀγαθὸν πλὴν εἰ σιγῇ τε καὶ λανθάνων, *Or.* 30, 53); reference by Versnel, Religious mentality 26.

¹⁰ See M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* I, München 1967³, 709. Cf. also Euripides, *Orestes* 37-8: ὀνομάζειν γὰρ αἰδοῦμαι θεὰς εὐμενίδας, *ibid.* 409 οἶδ' ἅς ἔλεξας, ὀνομάσαι δ' οὐ βούλομαι.

¹¹ For the zeugmatic function of *non* here see W. Kroll, *Catull*, Stuttgart 1959, 158, who also remarks: "tacito, weil sie nicht wagen darf, ihrer Neigung Ausdruck zu geben". Cf. also R. Ellis, *A Commentary on Catullus*, Oxford 1889², 302-303.

¹² E. Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal*, London 1980, ad loc. (p. 481): "perhaps she is (...) ashamed to request *forma* for a boy".

¹³ Sudhaus, Lautes und leises Beten 195: "Nicht ernste Besorgnis oder Furcht bewirkt es, daß die Gebete an Amor oder Venus oft *tacita vota* bleiben, sondern die *aidōs*." Schmidt, *Veteres philosophi* 57, refers in this connection to Cicero, *De imperio Cn. Pompei* 16: hoc brevissime dicam neminem umquam tam impudentem fuisse, qui a dis immortalibus tot et tantas res tacitus auderet optare, quot et quantas dii immortales ad Cn. Pompeium detulerunt.

¹⁴ Versnel, Religious Mentality 27.

¹⁵ Versnel, *ibid.* At 27 n. 105 Versnel refers to Eustathius in *Od.* 20,8 who says precisely why the goddess had this epithet: ἐκαλεῖτο δέ, φασι, ψίθυρος διὰ τὸ τὰς εὐχομένας αὐτῇ πρὸς τὸ οὖς λέγειν). Cf. also Petronius, *Satyricon* 85,5 (Eumolpius wants to have sex with a young boy while he sleeps): timidissimo murmure votum feci et "domina" inquam "Venus, si ego hunc puerum basiavero ita ut ille non sentiat, crass illi par columbarum donabo".

¹⁶ See also Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I 7,6.

¹⁷ Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* IV 26, 171,1: "What is it then that the Pythagoreans mean when they command us to pray aloud (μετὰ φωνῆς εὐχεσθαι κελεύουσιν)? As it seems to me, not that they thought that the deity could not hear those who speak silently, but that they wished prayers to be right, which no one would be ashamed to make in the knowledge of many".

¹⁸ Versnel, Religious Mentality 26. Versnel also notes that "these phenomena give an additional tragic aspect to a late defender of dying paganism, Libanius, when he says somewhat ironically that the pagan can no longer pray to his gods πλὴν ἢ σιγῇ καὶ λανθάνων" (*Or.* 30, 52); for a full quotation of the Libanius passage see above n. 9.

¹⁹ See P. Howell, *A Commentary on Book One of the Epigrams of Martial*, London 1980, 190: "The Greeks and Romans believed that, if a prayer was to be heard by the gods, it had to be spoken with the lips. So if a person wished to utter a prayer which he did not wish others to hear, he had to whisper it". Cf. also Persius, *Sat.* II 3-4: "non tu prece poscis emaci quae nisi seductis nequeas committere divis", with the scholion ad loc.: ideo palam non orant, ne iniqua eorum petitio audiatur.

²⁰ See also the scholion *ad locum* [quoted in Schmidt, *Veteres philosophi* 55-6]: Laverna ... est dea furum et simulacrum eius fures colunt, et qui consilia sua volunt tacita; nam preces eius cum silentio exercentur.

²¹ Cf. Sudhaus, Lautes und leises Beten 196: "Manch antikes Gebet würde dem modernen Empfinden und Verstehen als heller Wahnsinn erscheinen".

²² G. Appel, *De Romanorum precationibus* (RGVV 7,2), Giessen 1909, 210: *tacitus* is not always = *mutus*. Thus also Wagenvoort, *Orare, precari* 201. On the other hand, however, *murmur* can apparently designate audible speech, see e.g. Firmicus Maternus, *De errore* 22,1: Tunc a sacerdote omnium qui flebant fauces unguentur,

quibus perunctis sacerdos hoc lento murmure susurrat: θαρρεῖτε μύσται τοῦ θεοῦ σεσωσμένου / ἔσται γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐκ πόνων σωτηρία. Here the Greek words indicate the content of the *murmur*.

²³ See *ad locum* F. Bömer, P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphosen VI-VII*, Heidelberg 1976, 268.

²⁴ In a very similar scene in Propertius, *Elegies* IV 1, 99-102, the mss. read in line 101 the intractable sentence *Iunonis facite* (or *facito*) *votum impetrabile dixi*. Sudhaus, Lautes und leises Beten 186-187, proposed the brilliant emendation *tacite*, which yields: "In silence I made a vow to Juno that prevailed with her", so that the woman could give birth, but modern editors and commentators of Propertius have overlooked or unduly neglected this emendation.

²⁵ Cf. *ibid.* 366-7: "Then Circe turned to prayers and incantations and unknown chants to worship unknown gods".

²⁶ On the lowest form of Hecate, namely in the Underworld, see S.H. Braund, *Lucan, Civil War*, Oxford 1992, 285. See also *Phars.* V 104 "No wicked prayers are uttered there in silent whisper (*tacito susurro*)".

²⁷ Cf. *Met.* I 3 *magico susurramine*.

²⁸ On this passage see A. Abt, *Die Apologie des Apuleius von Madaura und die antike Zauberei* (RGVV 4,2), Gießen 1908, 286 [212].

²⁹ More passages are mentioned by Schmidt, *Veteres philosophi* 61-65. See e.g. Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* VII 488-489: "With silent spells she had swayed him and inspired long since in him a passion to answer hers" (*tacitis nam cantibus illum/ flexerat et simili iamdudum adflarat amore*). And the *Codex Theodosianus* IX 38,6 (from 381 CE) stipulates that no amnesty may be given to those "who made poisons sought from noxious herbs and murmured over with incantations in dread secrecy".

³⁰ J. Bidez & F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés. Zoroastre, Ostanès et Hystaspe d'après la tradition grecque*, 2 vols., Paris 1938, II 285-6, quote this passage. For another Christian picture of a *magus*, but in a negative sense, see *Passio apostolorum Petri et Pauli* 8 (p. 229 Lipsius-Bonnet): Simon [Magus] ... *incantare atque inmurmurare dira carmina coepit*.

³¹ See e.g. Herodotus I 47,3, where the Pythia says in the name of Apollo *καφοῦ συνίημι καὶ οὐ φωνεῖντος ἀκούω*. Cf. Seneca, *De Benef.* II 1,4: "If men had to make their vows to the gods openly, they would be more sparing of them; so true is it that even to the gods, to whom we most rightly make supplication, we would prefer to pray in silence and in the secrecy of our hearts" (*vota homines parcius facerent si palam facienda essent; adeo etiam deos, quibus honestissime supplicamus, tacite malumus et intra nosmet ipsos precari*). The latter passage seems to imply that by the first century CE in some philosophical circles at least silent prayer was beginning to be more and more acceptable. I doubt Wagenvoort's interpretation of Ovid, *Fasti* VI 251 *in prece totus eram*, 'I was entirely absorbed in prayer': "Nowhere that I know in the whole of Latin literature before Christian times could we find another example of a man thus riveted in prayer. Nor can it possibly be that Ovid means he prayed aloud (*oravit*). A man riveted in prayer was certainly silent" (H. Wagenvoort, *Orare, precari* 208). This is probably too much of a Christian interpretation.

³² See R. Mortley, *From Word to Silence II: The Way of Negation, Christian and Greek*, Bonn 1986.

³³ But see also already Numenius *ap.* Eusebius, *PE* XI 22,1, where this second century CE Middle Platonist clearly states that contact with the highest deity is impossible if one tries to realize that by means of silencing all senses or corporeal

activities. Only a mystical silence is fitting; the passage is noted by G. Mensching, *Das heilige Schweigen* (RGVV 20,2), Gießen 1926, 22. See also O. Casel, *De philosophorum graecorum silentio mystico* (RGVV 16,2), Giessen 1919.

³⁴ In *Praep. Evang.* IV 13,1 Eusebius quotes from Apollonius' *Περὶ θυσίων* the following sentence: *μόνω δὲ χρῶτο πρὸς αὐτὸν αἰεὶ τῷ κρείττονι λόγῳ, λέγω δὲ τῷ μὴ διὰ στόματος ἰόντι, καὶ παρὰ τοῦ καλλίστου τῶν ὄντων τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν αἰτοίῃ τάγαθά*. This 'better logos that does not go through the mouth' suggests silent prayer. In that case already Apollonius would have been its advocate, which is not unthinkable, but the historical Apollonius seems to have conformed to traditional prayer practice (see G. Petzke, *Die Traditionen über Apollonius von Tyana und das Neue Testament*, Leiden 1970, 212-213) and it is uncertain whether Eusebius had direct access to Apollonius' treatise (see E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, Darmstadt 1956 (= 1923), 39-40 and 343-6). On this passage see further K. Schneider, *Die schweigenden Götter. Eine Studie zur Gottesvorstellung des religiösen Platonismus*, Hildesheim 1966, 68-69.

³⁵ This sentence is also found as no. 427 in the so-called *Sentences of Sextus*; see H. Chadwick's edition (Cambridge 1959) *ad locum*, p. 180.

³⁶ Cf. Proclus, in *Cratylum* p. 59 Boissonade *εὐφήμως καὶ πρεπούση θεοῖς σιγῇ, in Rempublicam* I p. 85 Kroll *σιγῇ τῇ πρεπούση σέβων, in Theaetulum* II 9 p. 106, III 7 p. 132. On Proclus see further H. Koch, *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita in seinen Beziehungen zum Neuplatonismus und Mysterienwesen*, Mainz 1900, 128-131. Other Neoplatonic passages in Schmidt, *Veteres philosophi* 67-8.

³⁷ A. Hamman, *Das Gebet in der Alten Kirche*, Bern etc. 1989, offers as no. 48 a prayer on papyrus from the third century, which he regards as a Christian prayer. Hamman, however, overlooked the fact that the text of this prayer is identical to *Corp. Herm.* I 31!

³⁸ See A.-J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* IV, Paris 1954, 76-7 (70-7 is a paragraph titled *Dieu est incompréhensible, indéfinissable, indicible*). A very striking ancient Egyptian parallel (*Instruction of Any* 4) to the Hermetic ideas about silent worship is adduced by G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, Cambridge 1986, 70 (who owes it to J.-P. Mahé, *Hermès en Haute-Egypte II*, Quebec 1982).

³⁹ R. Mortley, *From Word to Silence*, 2 vols, Bonn 1986, II 251: "To say that God is unknowable, incomprehensible, unspeakable, seems to constitute an approach which will perfectly well accommodate the call to silence"; although he adds that "the way of silence is a far more radical renunciation of language than is the via negativa" (252).

⁴⁰ See R. Mortley, *From Word to Silence* I 122-4: the centrality of silence in the Gnostics.

⁴¹ See further the numerous references in F. Siegert, *Nag-Hammadi-Register*, Tübingen 1982, 300; also the Index in the first edition of *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. J.M. Robinson, New York etc. 1977, 490 s.v. Silence (note that in the second edition, San Francisco-Leiden 1988, this Index is missing!). Very useful also is the index s.v. of B. Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures*, New York 1987, 509. On personification of Sige see also A. Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, Leipzig-Berlin 1923, 42-43.

⁴² David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey*, Assen-Philadelphia 1993.

⁴³ See [H.L. Strack-] P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* IV 1, München 1926, 231-2.

⁴⁴ The *Shema* consists of three Torah passages: Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num. 15:37-41.

⁴⁵ See O. Holtzmann, *Berakot* (Die Mischna I 1), Giessen 1912, 56.

⁴⁶ For Talmud Jerushalmi passage (e.g. *Ber.* IV 7a) I refer to Billerbeck's *Kommentar zum NT IV* 1, 231-2.

⁴⁷ In *Midrash Psalms* CXIX 2 we find the other motive, namely fear that enemies will hear the prayers. I. Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, Hildesheim 1967 (= Frankfurt 1931), 73, argued that the individual prayers offered in a prostrate position in the temple after the incense offering were silent ones, a very doubtful thesis also supported by J. Heineman, *Prayer in the Talmud*, Berlin 1976, 125 n. 7.

⁴⁸ A.S. Pease (ed.), *M. Tulli Ciceronis de divinatione libri duo*, Darmstadt 1963, 326.

⁴⁹ W.D. Davies & D.C. Allison, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* I, Edinburgh 1988, 586. See also C.G. Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings*, New York 1970 (= 1930), 116: "Jesus did not mean more than a warning against ostentation and publicity. He did not want to limit private prayer to the house".

⁵⁰ See e.g. G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Three Centuries of the Christian Era* I, Cambridge MA 1927, 368-374.

⁵¹ On Clement and silence see Mortley, *From Word to Silence* II 36ff.

⁵² This is the somewhat oldfashioned translation by M.R. James in his *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford 1924, 335. The text, in both the Greek and Latin version, is in R.A. Lipsius & M. Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha* I, Darmstadt 1959 (= Leipzig 1891), 96-99. The passage is referred to in A. Hamman, *La prière chrétienne et la prière païenne: formes et différences*, *ANRW* II 23,2 (1980) 1226-7.

⁵³ This is the oracle reported by Herodotus I 47 (see above note 31). Ter-tullian's text runs as follows: (3) sono etiam vocis subiectos oportet, aut quantis arteriis opus est, si pro sono audiamur! Deus autem non vocis sed cordis auditor est, sicut conspensor. (4) Daemonium oraculi Pythii 'Et mutum', inquit, 'intellego et non loquentem exaudio'. Dei aures sonum expectant? Quomodo ergo oratio Ioniae de imo ventre ceti ... ad caelum potuit evadere?

⁵⁴ Cyprian on Hanna: (5) ... quae Deum non clamosa petitione sed tacite et modeste ... precabatur, ... loquebatur non voce sed corde, quia sic Dominum sciebat audire.

⁵⁵ My attention was drawn to this passage by the short note of M. Slusser, *Reading silently in antiquity*, *JBL* 111 (1992) 499.

⁵⁶ This interpretation is corroborated by Cassian, *Institutio* II 10,3.

⁵⁷ See also O. Chadwick, *John Cassian*, Cambridge 1968², 104-108.

⁵⁸ On this treatise and the problem of its authorship Owen, *John Cassian* 90-91.

⁵⁹ On this treatise see J.W. Trigg, *Origen. The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church*, London 1985, 156-163.

⁶⁰ *Novella* 137,6 (p. 699 Schoell-Kroll) runs as follows: κελεύομεν πάντας ἐπισκόπους τε καὶ πρεσβυτέρους μὴ κατὰ τὸ σεσιωπημένον ἀλλὰ μετὰ φωνῆς τῷ πιστοτάτῳ λαῷ ἑξακουμένης ... τὴν προσευχὴν ποιῆσαι. I owe the reference to J. Balogh, *Lautes und leises Beten*, *ARW* 23 (1925) 347-348.

A VENTURE IN CRITICAL ISLAMIC HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ITS FAILURE

MUHAMMAD QASIM ZAMAN

Summary

The concern to acquaint the Muslims of India with the earliest history of Islam, and to help them become better Muslims, has characterised the Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’s historical scholarship since its inception in 1894. This paper concentrates on a monumental study of the life and achievement of the Prophet, the *Sīrat al-Nabī*, (7 vols., 1918-1980), produced by two distinguished scholars associated with the Nadwa. Planned as an authoritative presentation of the Prophet Muhammad’s life, the *Sīrat al-Nabī* sought to answer Western scholarly criticisms on the Prophet, and remove all religious doubts perceived as having an unsettling effect on Muslims in British India. A clearly reformist concern, viz. to invigorate the Muslims’ religious identity by reaffirming their link with their sacred history, guided the conception and execution of the project. Although there initially was a conspicuous concern to maintain high standards of critical historiography, it was gradually nudged out by the reformist outlook. By the time the *Sīyar-i Sahāba* series was initiated in the 1930s—with the purpose of showing how the Prophet’s life and conduct shaped those of his Companions, who in their own right could thus serve as moral guides—virtually all pretensions to critical historiography had manifestly been abandoned. Historiography had given way, the more glaringly in the *Sīyar-i Sahāba*, to hagiography. For all its methodological and other deficiencies, however, the *Sīra* historiography of the Nadwa is of importance for two main reasons: it has served as a vehicle for the expression of reformist concerns, a way of responding to the dilemmas which the authors of these works perceived as confronting Indian Muslims; and it has been a medium through which a continuing effort has been made to acquaint Muslims with their sacred past, and with Islam itself.

Introduction

In the history of Muslim historiography in modern South Asia, the name of the Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’ figures prominently.¹ Founded in 1894, the role of this institution was ambitiously conceived as that of a platform which would bring together religious scholars (‘ulamā’) of various sectarian persuasions; try to revitalize the active role they played in public life in the past; defend Islam against Western intellectual onslaught; and preserve the traditional Islamic heritage.² In reinvigorating the role of the ‘ulamā’, or even in bringing them together, the Nadwa was unsuccessful from the

start. But in trying to preserve interest in traditional learning, striving to check the impact of the West on contemporary Indian Muslim society, and in generating a strong interest in historical studies among graduates of its Dar al-‘Ulum, the Nadwa fared better.

This paper seeks to study an aspect of the Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’s historical interests, and their nature and motivations. The study is limited to an explication of the ways in which, in a millieu wherein Muslim religious life was perceived as being confronted with external (especially Western) threats, Islamic historiography was made the vehicle for the expression of moral and reformist ideas. The classic work written to serve this purpose, and one which still remains practically unsurpassed in South Asian Islamic historiography, is the *Sīrat al-Nabī* (*The Life [and Conduct] of the Prophet* [Muhammad])³ by Shiblī Nu‘mānī (1857-1914) and his pupil, Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī (1884-1953).⁴ It is primarily with this work that the following pages will be concerned. Though something will be said about the contents of the volumes comprising this work, the basic concern is to analyze the historiographical approach involved here, that is, the choice and handling of the sources and the motivations underlying such procedures in so far as these motivations can be perceived. Reference would also be made, though more briefly, to another of the Nadwa’s more ambitious projects, the *Siṣar-i Sahāba*, a multi-volume series written, *inter alia*, by Mu‘īn al-din Ahmad Nadwī (a pupil of Sulaymān Nadwī). Though different in scope, and unequal to the *Sīrat al-Nabī* in quality, it carries the purpose of the latter further in being inspired by a similar vision and in being an exemplification of the arguments and ideas set out in the *Sīrat al-Nabī*.

Before proceeding to the subject of our enquiry, a few words about Shiblī and the Nadwa seem to be in order. Much of the credit for the Nadwa’s historical interests (and some for the Nadwa’s existence itself) goes to Muhammad Shiblī Nu‘mānī (1857-1914),⁵ a well-known scholar and historian who, before he came to join the Nadwa in 1904 (though he had actively participated in its establishment and been informally associated with it), had taught for sixteen years (1882-1898) at the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh. Shiblī, like many of his contemporaries, was acutely con-

scious of the threat to Islam in India posed by the end of Muslim political dominance there, the exposure of Muslims to the West and its impact on them, Western criticism of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad, and—not least—the Hindu revivalist and conversion movements.⁶ The response of the late-19th century Indian ‘ulamā’ to such perceived threats took the form, as Francis Robinson has perceptively observed, of inculcating and disseminating “better religious knowledge. Muslims should know much more clearly and much more certainly than before how to behave as Muslims...If Islam could no longer be supported by the swords of Muslim princes, it could now be supported by the enhanced religious understanding of Muslims themselves.”⁷ For his part, Shiblī too sought to revive the interest of educated Muslims in the Islamic tradition. He wanted to reform Muslim education in such a way that, while Western learning would be accorded recognition, traditional Muslim sciences (taught in ways commensurate with the exigencies of changing times) would be developed rather than discarded. Further, he proposed to systematically refute Western criticism on Islam, and to present its “heroes” with the intention of generating a certain confidence of the Indian Muslims in their past. This vision Shiblī tried to impart to the Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’.

Shiblī appears to have conceived of the Nadwa as striking a middle path between “the extremes of Aligarh’s secularism and Deoband’s conservatism.”⁸ His world-view, though essentially traditional,⁹ did nevertheless accomodate some “modernistic” tendencies, such as a recognition of the need to learn Western languages and the modern sciences, to reform the traditional syllabi of the *madrasas*,¹⁰ and to reinterpret and rejuvenate medieval Islamic theology in the form of a “new” *‘Ilm al-Kalām*¹¹ so as to defend Islam against Western intellectual challenge; etc. Shiblī’s long association with Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān (d. 1898), the foremost Indian Muslim modernist, seems to have been largely responsible for his receptivity to such tendencies.¹² These moderately modernistic tendencies faced strong opposition from his colleagues at the Nadwa, however, who were committed to a more traditional outlook; it was their influence that eventually prevailed over the direction the Nadwa was to take, especially after Shiblī’s resignation from his position there (1913) and his death (1914).

Consequently, rather than being a mean between Aligarh and Deoband, the Nadwa gradually drifted towards greater conservatism. Shibli was able, however, to impart his historical interests to his pupils at the Nadwa. He also tried to imbue them with a “reformist” vision, which apparently signified for him—but particularly for his usually conservative disciples—not reforming Islam in the light of new conditions but rather reforming Indian Muslim society by reintroducing its members to Islam.¹³ The Nadwa’s historiography became an expression of this concern. Shibli also imparted an awareness of the Western intellectual challenge to Islam, a challenge he believed was luring many Muslims away from their commitment to orthodox traditions;¹⁴ this consciousness, variously expressed by scholars of the Nadwa in their writings, constitutes a basic theme of the school’s historiography.¹⁵

The Sīrat al-Nabī: Plans and Intentions

The January 1912 issue of *al-Nadwa*, the monthly journal of the Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’, carried a note by Shiblī in which he announced his intention of writing an authoritative *Sīra* of the Prophet.¹⁶ He explained the necessity for this project in terms of the inavailability of any reliable work on *Sīra* to the new generation of Muslims who were being educated in the Western academic tradition, and/or were in other ways subject to Western influences. Not finding any good books on the *Sīra* written by Muslim authors, these young men often turned to European works on the Prophet’s life. These latter works, however, were unsuited for Muslim readers on account not only of their factual inaccuracies but also for their prejudices and the hostility of their tone, all of which made them definitely harmful. It was important, Shiblī reasoned, that a new work on the *Sīra* be written. For this, he appealed for funds and proposed establishing a committee to conduct and supervise the project.

The reasons for writing the *Sīra* were presented in more elaborate terms by Shiblī in the Introduction to the first volume of the *Sīrat al-Nabī*, which was edited by Sulaymān Nadwī and published in 1918, four years after Shiblī’s death. The purpose of the work as stated here was essentially a reiteration of what Shiblī had said in

1912: the Indian Muslims needed an authoritative work on the *Sīra*, which would acquaint them with the life, achievements, and teachings of the Prophet, answer the questions arising in their minds, and effectively check the need to have recourse to prejudice-ridden Western writings on the Prophet's life. The work would bring out the perfection of the Prophet; it would also try to refute the notion, to which some educated Muslims exposed to Western influences had started giving credence, that the Prophet—for all his greatness as a reformer—was prone to faults of personal character.¹⁷

But apart from the motive just noted, which appears to have been foremost in Shiblī's thinking, at least two other reasons were clearly identified by him. One was to carefully scrutinize Western works on the Prophet, answer the criticism made by Western authors, and to expose the weaknesses and prejudices from which such works suffered. Throughout the first volume of the *Sīrat al-Nabī*, which is almost exclusively the work of Shiblī himself, the author shows a keen awareness of these criticisms on the Prophet, mustering all his intellectual resources to refute them as persuasively as possible.¹⁸ Indeed, as Shiblī argued in the Introduction, and as he had already done elsewhere,¹⁹ there was need to formulate a new version of *ʿIlm al-Kalām*. In its medieval form, *ʿIlm al-Kalām* was a method used by Muslim theologians to combat, in a rational manner, those views which were perceived as a threat to the fundamentals of Muslim belief. Initially such a threat came, *inter alia*, from Muslim exposure to Hellenistic thought from the 2nd century A.H./8th century A.D. onwards. In the present age it was the modern Western criticism on Islam and the Prophet Muhammad which, Shiblī believed, represented a threat comparable in its gravity to that faced in the first centuries of Islam. This new challenge had to be met by techniques similar to those of medieval *Kalām* whose relevance and continued efficacy Shiblī affirmed.²⁰ The difference, however, was that in the present *ʿIlm al-Kalām* was to help defend not just purely theological problems, as was the case in medieval times, but all aspects of Islam that might come under attack, in particular matters related to the life of the Prophet—that is, *historical* matters as well.²¹ This is scarcely to be wondered at: given that “an affirmation of prophecy was an element of the faith, questions [which] arose as to the kind

of life, character and habits of the person who was the bearer of divine revelation and the representative of God [needed to be definitively answered].’’²²

Another reason why, according to Shiblī, there was need to write a *Sīra* of the Prophet was the author’s feeling that ‘‘uptill now, no such book has been written on the *Sīra* in which sufficient care has been taken to utilize only those materials which are wholly reliable.’’²³ Countless works had, of course, been written on the *Sīra*, but the authors of such works had not been able, or had not chosen, to apply the same rigorous standards in scrutinizing the correctness of their materials as experts in the study of the Prophet’s traditions (*hadith*; plural: *ahādīth*) applied to guarantee the trustworthiness of a particular tradition.²⁴ In writing this *Sīra*, therefore, Shiblī’s rather high-sounding aim was to base himself on the most securely attested reports available. It was primarily the canonical *hadith* collections which he regarded as such trustworthy materials.²⁵ He sought, in effect, to attempt writing a *Sīra* on the basis of *hadith* rather than the early *Sīra* works.²⁶ The latter observation leads us to the question of the methodology Shiblī tried to adopt in writing this work.²⁷

The Sīrat al-Nabī: Methodological Constraints

Several scholars who have written on Shiblī and his works have tried as well to analyze his methodology in the *Sīrat al-Nabī*. We need not, therefore, cover the same ground once again.²⁸ There are, however, several points that require much further clarification. Some of the methodological problems involved will be briefly noted here in the form of the following considerations.

As already noted, Shiblī’s concern was to base his *Sīrat al-Nabī* on the most secure and reliable sources. The most authoritative source of information on the Prophet’s career, he noted, is the Koran, whose testimony, wherever available, was to be considered definitive and overriding. Even the most securely attested *hadith* might be rejected when in conflict with the Divine Word.²⁹ But since the Koran usually makes only very few and mostly indirect allusions to the Prophet’s career, recourse must be had to *hadith*, even to interpret the Koran. The canonical *hadith* collections must

serve therefore as the primary source of information.³⁰ In addition to this source, reliance was also to be placed on the most trustworthy of the early works on the *Sīra*; such an expedient seems to have been against Shiblī's inclinations to some extent, but was necessitated because much of *hadith* lacked a historical interest. Shiblī identified three historical accounts as trustworthy, viz., the *Sīra* of Ibn Ishāq, the *Tabaqāt* of Ibn Saʿd, and the *Tārīkh* of Tabarī.³¹ One of the most important early sources, the *Maghāzī* of al-Wāqidī was categorically dismissed as a collection of unreliable stories and its author denounced as a 'liar'.³²

In addition to a gradation of sources with reference to their authoritativeness—the Koran, *hadith*, the more reliable historical accounts—Shiblī emphasizes as a methodological principle the importance of "*dirāya*",³³ understood as critical evaluation of a given report to ensure that it satisfies such requirements as internal consistency, agreement with other well-attested *hadith* reports, conformity to human reason and experience, etc. Through this method, which Shiblī considers to have come about already with the Prophet's companions, the sifting of sound from unreliable *hadith* could be more rigourously undertaken. However, while Shiblī, following traditional authorities on *hadith* criticism, lays down the principles of "*dirāya*" in quite elaborate terms, his actual use of these principles is rather irregular. Indeed, one is almost inclined to say that he mostly invokes these principles at places where the exigencies of his argument require that certain traditions be explained away. Another noteworthy consideration here is that while he shows awareness of the principle that a *hadith* which predicts future "historical" events is to be doubted, he does not seem to appreciate the need to detect the parallel but more subtle phenomenon of post-Prophetic sectarian and theological controversies being reflected in Prophetic *hadith* and *Sīra* through backward projection.³⁴

Another interesting principle which Shiblī mentions as having been articulated by earlier authorities on *hadith*, and which he elaborates at some length, is that the rigour with which the testimony of a certain individual is to be weighed depends, inter alia, on (and varies according to) the nature of the subject on which such testimony has a bearing. In other words, if the subject is one

which has no juridical consequences, or certitude and definiteness on it is not fundamental to the faith, a less reliable report may also be given credence. Thus the authority of a less trustworthy person may be accepted on a minor religious point, or on accounts pertaining to the *Sīra*, but rejected on more fundamental religious problems.

The foregoing principle raises some interesting points. It should be noted here that Shiblī does not explicitly affirm this principle though he does appear to quote it approvingly. As a possible reason for Shiblī's reticence, one might suggest that for him the importance of the *Sīra* is of a rather different order than it was for medieval Muslims. For now, aspects of the *Sīra* need to be defended like problems of theology once were, and, for Shiblī, it is as much a part of *ʿIlm al-Kalām* as any fundamental point of theology. Therefore standards of verification for historical reports have to be as unrelenting as those for juridically critical traditions. But if this hypothesis is valid, why does Shiblī appear nevertheless to approve of this principle? Perhaps, such can be deemed understandable since he has to justify his reliance on sources less exalted than *hadith*, viz., the historical works. But here again, the question arises of why he accepts one historian but rejects another very important one. He does however try to justify that choice, and it would be interesting, even at the cost of some digression, to examine his case and that put forth by his pupil, Sulaymān Nadwī. This exercise can give us some insight into the provenance of some of those methodological constraints which one can detect in the author's approach.

The total rejection of al-Wāqidī by Shiblī and Sulaymān Nadwī is justified by them essentially in terms of the very unfavourable attitude of the traditionists, the *muhaddithūn*, towards him.³⁵ But a categorical denunciation of al-Wāqidī does not entail for Shiblī and Sulaymān Nadwī serious suspicions about the reliability either of Ibn Saʿd, who was a pupil of al-Wāqidī and drew heavily upon him, or of al-Tabarī who quotes extensively from al-Wāqidī.

In fairness to Shiblī and Sulaymān Nadwī, it should be pointed out that the criticism on Ibn Ishāq is—on the part of the medieval scholars of *hadith* and of those evaluating the transmitters of *hadith*—milder than their criticism on al-Wāqidī. It has to be remembered, however, that when the *hadith* experts criticise al-

Wāqidī, they do so for his weaknesses in *hadith*, not in history. For his competence in the latter, they are usually very articulate in their appreciation.³⁶ To reject al-Wāqidī as a historian, on the basis of what the traditionists say about him in his capacity as a *muhaddith* is thus a rather high-handed way of dismissing the historian. The high-handedness appears more striking if one agrees with Prof. ‘A. ‘A. al-Dūrī’s assessment that al-Wāqidī was not only a more meticulous and methodologically superior historian than Ibn Ishāq, but “in content and method...[was] more strictly in keeping with the school of Medina than...Ibn Ishāq.”³⁷

But if Shiblī was trying to write a historical work fashioned largely out of *hadith* materials, it is not particularly surprising (but would seem rather to be broadly consistent with his approach) that he is judging a historian on the basis of what is said about him essentially as a traditionist. The point can, in fact, justly be taken to illustrate the traditionalist bent of Shiblī’s mind.³⁸ But there might as well be more to Shiblī’s antipathy to al-Wāqidī than a mere echo of what many (though not all) *muhaddithūn* thought about the latter.

One might suggest, for instance, that the influence of Sayyid Ahmad might have had something to do with this attitude. In his *al-Khutbāt al-Ahmadiyya* (1871), which Sayyid Ahmad had written as a rejoinder to William Muir’s *Life of Mahomet* (1858-61), the former had consciously avoided any reliance on al-Wāqidī’s accounts.³⁹ A more important reason influencing Shiblī’s attitude (and one which might be relevant with respect to Sayyid Ahmad as well), appears to have been Shiblī’s awareness of the fact that many of the Western criticisms on the Prophet were based on information derived from al-Wāqidī, whom the Orientalists rated very highly. What Shiblī does is not only to refute these criticisms, but, like a good *mutakallim*, he challenges the validity of the *source* on which such criticism might often be based.⁴⁰ This suggestion is further corroborated by Shiblī’s rejection (even though rare) of *hadith* on similar grounds, as already pointed out.

Finally, by painting al-Wāqidī in dark colours and loudly disclaiming any reliance on him, Shiblī may consciously or unconsciously have tried to heighten the impression that his other sources were all reliable. al-Wāqidī’s disgrace would serve to

underscore the unrelenting rigour of Shiblī's methodology, the reliability and authoritativeness of his own historiography.

The Sīrat al-Nabī: Beyond the Prophet's Life

One thing which should be clear from the foregoing is that there was a certain tension between the two purposes Shiblī had in view when he embarked on the *Sīrat al-Nabī* project. He wanted to write a definitive work on the *Sīra*, and wanted it to be written according to the best scholarly standards and especially the best available sources. But, on the other hand, he also wanted the work to serve certain reformist purposes, in so far as contemporary Indian Muslims were concerned, and—perhaps as a by-product of this same concern—he also wanted to refute Western criticisms. The reformist inclinations gave him an axe to grind. This does not necessarily make him a bad scholar. Volume I of the *Sīrat al-Nabī*, of which Shiblī is the exclusive author, is a *tour de force* of erudition; the account in general is persuasive, and so are many of Shiblī's criticisms of Western writers. But there already are indications that the author has an agenda of his own, and the treatment of al-Wāqidī is an important but not an isolated example. On the other hand, the very fact that there are hints of a tension between the scholar and the reformist is itself a sign of hope: for it means that scholarly concerns are important enough to cause a tension. The subsequent volumes of the *Sīrat al-Nabī* do not maintain a balance. The scholarly apparatus is still there, but only the apparatus; the interest is now through and through reformist.

There are several possible reasons why such a balance seems to have been jettisoned (and the tension resolved?). One could be the difference in the interests and abilities of Shiblī and Sulaymān Nadwī. Shiblī after all only lived to complete the first volume and to contribute some parts of the second; the rest is the work of his pupil. Sulaymān Nadwī was far less exposed to modernistic influences than was Shiblī; and unlike Shiblī, he does not seem to have felt that it was really important to try to refute Western criticisms.⁴¹ In short, his was a more conservative approach, and this may to some extent account for the direction the *Sīrat al-Nabī* took under his authorship.

The second reason which can help account for the question posed above has to do not so much with the interests of the two authors as with the nature of the work they were undertaking. As Shiblī had conceived of it, the project was intended not merely to chronicle the history of the Prophet's life in the most reliable way possible, but to accomplish much more. If Muslims were to be presented with a model wherefrom they could seek guidance, it was essential to supplement a discussion on the Prophet's political career with another on his character, personality, teachings, and achievement. In so far as the latter aspects were considered integral to a comprehensive *Sīra* of the Prophet, and to the purpose for which it was being written, it is to be expected that the authors should have been as interested in these as in the purely 'historical' aspects of the Prophet's career. At the same time, however, a presentation of the Prophet's moral conduct—which occupies the greater part of volume II (1920)—would be more amenable to reformist purposes, and a critical sense perhaps rather more difficult to achieve here. This latter consideration may therefore also partially account for some difference which the careful reader can detect between the strictly historical sections of the *Sīrat al-Nabī* and the rest of it.⁴²

But there is a third possible reason as well which may partly explain why the apparent balance between critical and reformist concerns, as evidenced by the first volume, begins to be abandoned already in the second. It will be recalled that Shiblī had intended to rely as far as possible on collections of reliable *hadith*, rather than on the *Sīra* works. So long as he was trying to extract from *hadith* facts of history (an effort to which the *hadith* is not naturally amenable, as already remarked), there was much greater need for critical discernment: *hadith* materials, despite the preference accorded to them, had to be constantly compared with *Sīra* works, and some attention paid to Western scholarship as well. On the Prophet's character and moral conduct (and precepts) on the other hand, *hadith* was the unparalleled source, and could serve as not just the primary but a sufficiently complete and self-contained basis for discussion. Such being the case, it is perhaps understandable that the discussion in subsequent volumes should be much less trammelled by critical concerns than it is in the first volume or in some of the second.

Notwithstanding the consideration that reformist purposes were built into the scheme of the *Sīra al-Nabī*, it does seem that after Shiblī's death at a stage when the project was still far from complete, the work acquired a tone and tenor which was probably different and rather more conservative than what Shiblī may have intended. Perhaps more curiously, from the latter half of the fourth volume (1932), the focus of the work shifted from the Prophet (his life and his conduct) to the fundamental tenets of Islamic faith and practice.

Already in volume III (1924), the discussion is neither historical nor ethico-moral, but rather essentially of a theological interest: it is devoted entirely to the miracles of the Prophet and to a defence of their possibility. The arguments of the medieval theologians as regards miracles are adduced at length, and a case for the rational justification of the possibility of miracles is presented on that basis. Another long and erudite discussion on Western philosophical criticism of miracles, contributed by 'Abd al-Bārī Nadwī, tries to show that Western philosophical speculation does not disprove the possibility of the miraculous. The rest of the volume is occupied with a discussion of the more famous of the Prophet's miracles, in a conservative though moderate spirit.⁴³

Volume IV of the *Sīrat al-Nabī* helps make the further transition to the fundamental tenets of Islam.⁴⁴ Sulaymān Nadwī describes here the complete transformation which the Prophet brought about in the life of the Arabs. After a detailed introduction on the nature and function of prophecy, he describes the situation as it prevailed before the rise of Islam. He argues that Arab society suffered from serious vices which called for a prophetic mission, but that the Arabs also had some special qualities which explains why they—rather than any other people—were divinely chosen to be the bearers of the sacred message.⁴⁵ He then proceeds to a very detailed elaboration of this message, which the Prophet presented before humanity through the Arabs. This occupies the author during the second half of the fourth volume, and throughout the three subsequent volumes. Henceforward the purpose is to describe Islam as a religious system with a fourfold classification into beliefs (*ʿaqāʾid*), religious observances (*ʿibādāt*), morals/ethics (*akhlāq*), and social interaction (*muʿāmalāt*), occupying respectively volumes IV, V

(1935), VI (1938), and VII (1980 [posthumus]). As Sulaymān Nadwī himself expressed it:

The purpose of this series has been to answer two questions: who was the Messenger of Islam?; and what did he bring with him (to mankind?) The first three volumes of the *Sīra* were an answer to the first question; the remaining are addressed to the second.⁴⁶

The last-mentioned transition from the *Sīra* and *uswa* (conduct) of the Prophet to Islam as a religious and social system is of considerable interest, though we cannot occupy ourselves with it in the present context. Suffice it to note the author's awareness of the need to acquaint Muslims with Islam as a system of faith and practice just as there is awareness of the necessity to teach educated Muslims about the life and conduct of the Prophet: both are expressions of the same concern, and though such an elaborate discussion on Islam might seem a little odd in the context of what purports to be a biography of the Prophet, it is scarcely fortuitous.

The *Sīrat al-Nabī* project was practically complete by the late 1930s, though one slim volume was very belatedly to be published in 1980, long after Sulaymān Nadwī's death. After the *Sīrat al-Nabī*, no work of comparable scope or significance was undertaken on the *Sīra* by scholars associated with the Nadwa. Their interest in the *Sīra* did continue, however, though it found more modest outlets. For instance, while the *Sīrat al-Nabī* was in progress, Sulaymān Nadwī delivered a series of eight lectures on the *Sīra* which were published soon afterwards as *Khutbāt-i Madrās*, and have been widely acclaimed as an exceptionally lucid presentation.⁴⁷ Apart from him, other scholars from the Nadwa occasionally wrote on themes relating to the Prophet's *Sīra*. Mu'īn al-dīn Ahmad Nadwī, for instance, wrote on the life of the Prophet as part of a four-volume work on Islamic history from the rise of Islam till the end of the Baghdad caliphate in A.D. 1258.⁴⁸ More recently, Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan 'Alī Nadwī (b. 1913), the present Rector of the Nadwa, has authored two important books on the *Sīra*, one a detailed biography of the Prophet,⁴⁹ the other a series of reflections essentially on the meaning and message of the Prophet's life for present-day Muslims.⁵⁰ These are in addition to the detailed disquisitions on the life and times of the Prophet which punctuate the extensive writings of 'Alī Nadwī.⁵¹

The Siyar-i Sahāba

Apart from occasional works on the *Sīra* of the Prophet, there was another major scholarly enterprise which sought to further some of those purposes which the *Sīrat al-Nabī* had come to set for itself. This is the *Siyar-i Sahāba* project, which on completion came to comprise twelve volumes, and on which several scholars associated with the Nadwa expended their considerable energies between the mid-1930s and the mid-1950s.⁵²

The purpose of the *Siyar-i Sahāba* series was to present the lives and conduct of the leading Companions of the Prophet in such a way that these personages could be emulated in their conduct by modern Muslims. Clearly then, the series was inspired by the same vision as had guided the *Sīrat al-Nabī*. In continuing the narrative from the Prophet's life and conduct on to those of his Companions, the series also sought to bear testimony to the success of the Prophet's mission, by showing how successfully the lives of those around him had been transformed by his precept and practice.⁵³ The latter suggestion had, of course, a two-fold significance in the contemporary context. The work represented an argument for taking the Companions of the Prophet as models to be emulated: as one of the contributors to the series expressed it, "the great requirement of our times is to present before the world the sacred life of the Companions in such a manner as would activate the people, and with such an example before them they would themselves turn towards reforming their beliefs and actions."⁵⁴ But the case of the Prophet's Companions could be taken to indicate something else as well, which also seems to have been on the author's minds: their lives showed how drastically one could be transformed by following the example of the Prophet.⁵⁵ The latter idea, implicitly though strongly suggested, gives another reason why the *Siyar-i Sahāba* is to be regarded as a continuation of the *Sīrat al-Nabī*.

It is not possible in the present context to describe the contents and concerns of the volumes comprising the *Siyar-i Sahāba*. Some considerations of a general order may however be noted here. The series illustrates of course the lively interest which scholars associated with the Nadwa have taken in historical studies. The biographies of the Prophet's Companions are meticulously com-

piled, for which the authors deserve credit. Methodologically, however, the reader soon becomes aware that—unlike the *Sīrat al-Nabī* (at least in its initial stage and at the intentional level)—there is no awareness here of critically evaluating the materials from which the biographies in question are to be written. That a large portion of the “facts” on which this presentation is based have had a tendential shaping in the course of sectarian controversies in the first centuries of Islam is nowhere recognized.⁵⁶ The *Siyar-i Sahāba* is an orthodox Sunnī digest of the essential, non-controversial, invariably edifying information gleaned from medieval biographical dictionaries and other sources on the lives and virtues of the Companions.⁵⁷ It must be noted here that these sources themselves represent a medieval Sunnī consensus on how the Companions were to be remembered. To that consensus, a work such as the *Siyar-i Sahāba* contributes in at least two respects. It gives a tidier account of its subject-matter: where a medieval orthodox source would have often (but not invariably) glossed an embarrassing tradition or report, the authors of our modern digest simply omit it.⁵⁸ Secondly, the *Siyar-i Sahāba* is a far more concise and much more readily accessible presentation of the life and conduct of the Companions than most of its medieval predecessors. It strives, therefore, at once to disseminate widely and to *standardize* the way modern Muslims would regard their sacred past.⁵⁹

Conclusions

It now remains to remark briefly on certain trends in the Nadwa's historiography, both by way of recapitulating some of what has been said in the foregoing and in the form of a few additional observations.

It was noted earlier that the *Sīrat al-Nabī* began as, among other things, an apologetic venture. One of its purposes, initially, was to refute Western criticisms on the life of the Prophet though, to its credit, its tone was rather less apologetic than that of many other works belonging to that same period. Sulaymān Nadwī, however, did not share Shiblī's concern with painstaking refutations. He certainly was not indifferent to the challenge of the West, but wanted apparently to change the strategy. For him, the question was not

so much that of defending Islam against Western criticism as of carrying the attack into the adversary's camp. Shiblī had called for a new '*Ilm al-Kalām*';⁶⁰ Sulaymān Nadwī made a plea for a further reinterpretation of its function. Already in 1915, a year after Shiblī's death, he addressed the annual meeting of the Nadwat al-*'Ulamā'* in the following words:

'Ilm al-Kalām now means strengthening by rational argument everything which is related to religion.... Each and every aspect of Islamic history comes within the purview of *'Ilm al-Kalām*. [Hitherto] only defensive tactics have been employed. To attack other religions was not the *mutakallim*'s function so far. Now it is imperative that one who stands up for the defence of Islam should be an expert not just in defence but also in attack. He should be acquainted with Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Hinduism. For a *mutakallim*, it is no longer sufficient now to be learned in the Koran. He should also know the Torah, the Zend Avesta, the Bible, and the Vedas.⁶¹

It was not very long before Sulaymān Nadwī himself gave an illustration of the strategy he was envisaging. This was in the form of his *Khutbāt-i Madrās*, reference to which has already been made. A study of the various aspects of the Prophet's *Sīra* here turns on arguments which purport to demonstrate the Prophet's superiority over other prophets. The Prophet's pre-eminent position signifies in turn the superiority of Islam over all other religions, but in particular over Judaism and Christianity from whose adherents the principal attack and criticism on Islam was perceived to come.

The aggressive, rather than apologetic, approach advocated by Sulaymān Nadwī seems to have been realized in the work of Abu'l-Hasan *'Alī Nadwī*, who is a pupil of the former.⁶² With *'Alī Nadwī*, however, the concern no longer remains that of merely trying to demonstrate the superiority of Islam, but becomes rather a massive attack on the West and the values it is taken to represent. Nevertheless, it is significant that the *Sīra* continues to be a medium, if one among several, for *'Alī Nadwī*'s thoughts about the past and the present of the Muslim world. While stylistically and methodologically there is not much to tell *'Alī Nadwī*'s work on the *Sīra* from works of an earlier generation, his books on the *Sīra* contain more than the standard fare on the Prophet's life: in his disquisitions on what may be learnt from the example of the Prophet, there is to be heard a ring of certain themes in contemporary reformist rhetoric:

Now, were the Muslims to come down to the level where all the pagan communities subsisted at the time of the raising of the holy Apostle [Muhammad], and [where] the entire non-Muslim population of the world is finding itself today, and [were they to] plunge recklessly into worldly affairs and interests like the Arabs, Romans, and Persians of those days...what could it denote save the repudiation and betrayal of the early history of Islam?...The particular mould of a Muslim's life is such that he should either be engaged in the...propagation of the faith and other practical endeavours in its path, or be lending help and support to those who are so engaged...This is the chief message of the life of the sacred Prophet for Muslims. To remain indifferent to it is to allow its purpose to be wasted and [to] turn a blind eye to the fundamental reality the life of the Prophet presents to us.⁶³

Echoes of contemporary concerns in the *Sīra*, or the endeavour to respond to them through that medium, are interesting but scarcely exceptional; rather, they are reminiscent of another, and a more elaborate, effort by Shiblī and Sulaymān Nadwī to address some pressing problems of their own day by writing a biography of the Prophet.

What reformist concerns meant to the authors of the *Sīrat al-Nabī*, or what they signified for those writing the *Siyar-i Sahāba*, or what expression they have had in the writings of ʿAlī Nadwī, are quite often not the same things. Such is of course to be expected, especially since the literature in question was responsive to, if it was not generated by, contemporary concerns and dilemmas. It is a tribute to the historiography of the Nadwa, however, that it has endeavoured to maintain and preserve the tradition of *Sīra* historiography; this endeavour has been a part, and an expression, of the Nadwa's broader concern to cultivate a lively interest of the Muslims in the sacred history of Islam. The success has not been spectacular, but the effort has continued.

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¹ On the Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, see Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī, *Hayāt-i Shiblī*, (Azamgarh, n.d.), pp. 298-319, 386-400, 412-505, 636-667, and passim; Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857-1964*, (London, 1967), pp. 109-113; S.M. Ikrām, *Yādgār-i Shiblī*, (Lahore, 1971), pp. 282-313, 346-75; Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900*, (Princeton, 1982), 335-47; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition (Leiden, 1960- [hereafter *EI*(2)]),

s.v. "Nadwat al-ʿUlamā'" (Z.-I. Khan). The autobiography of Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan 'Alī Nadwī, the present rector of the Nadwat al-ʿUlamā', is also full of interest as a source on this institution, with which he has had a life-long association: see his *Kārwan-i Zindagī*, 3 vols., (Karachi, 1983-87), passim.

² See Shiblī Nu'mānī's (on whom cf. note 5, below) address to the first session of the Nadwat al-ʿUlamā', 1895, in *Rasā'il-i Shiblī*, (Amritsar, 1898), pp. 113-33; reprinted in *Khutbāt-i Shiblī*, (Azamgarh, 1941), pp. 28-49. Cf. Shiblī's addresses to other meetings and sessions of the Nadwa in 1907, 1908 and 1910, in *Khutbāt*, pp. 53-65, 86-154.

³ For a survey of writings on the life of the Prophet (*Sīra*) in the Urdu language, see Anwar Mahmūd Khālid, *Urdu nathr mein Sīrat-i Rasūl*, (Lahore, 1989); *ibid.*, pp. 535-98, on the *Sīrat al-Nabī* by Shiblī and Sulaymān Nadwī. For a general account of the Prophet's life and the historiography on it, see *EI*(2), s.v. "Muhammad" (F. Buhl, et al.); some of the earliest available materials on the Prophet's life are examined in *La Vie du Prophet Mahomet* (Colloque de Strasbourg, 1980), (Strasbourg, 1983). The writings on the Prophet in European languages are partially catalogued in M.A. Anees, *Guide to Sira and Hadith Literature in Western Languages*, (London, 1986).

⁴ On Sulaymān Nadwī, see the special issue of the *Ma'ārif*, (Azamgarh, 1955), dedicated to him; *EI*(2), s.v., (Z.-I. Khan), where further references may be found.

⁵ Several studies of Shiblī's life and work are available, some of which may be mentioned here: Sulaymān Nadwī, *Hayāt-i Shiblī*; Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, index, s.v.; S.M. Ikrām, *Yādgār-i Shiblī*; A.W. 'Azīm, *Shiblī ba-haythiyat Mu'arrikh*, (Lahore, 1968); M.A. Murad, *Intellectual Modernisms of Shiblī Naumani*, (Lahore, 1976); M.A. Syed, "A Study of Muslim Historiography in India: 1857-1914", Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1978, pp. 157-95; Anis Ahmad, "Two Approaches to Islamic History: a critique of Shiblī Nu'mānī's and Syed Ameer 'Alī's interpretations of history", Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1980.

⁶ See Shiblī, *Khutbāt*, pp. 30, 35f., 41ff., 53ff., 90ff., and passim; *idem.*, *Makātib-i Shiblī*, ed. Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī, (Azamgarh, 1928), pp. 178f., 197f.; also cf. *idem.*, *ʿIlm al-Kalām*, (Agra, n.d. [first publ. 1904]), pp. 2f., 8f.

⁷ Francis Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the impact of print", *Modern Asian Studies*, XXVII (1993), pp. 241f.

⁸ Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, p. 109.

⁹ In the Islamic context "traditionalism", or a "traditional" outlook, may be defined—with William Graham—as "a long-standing, overt predilection in diverse strands of Islamic life for recourse to previous authorities, above all the Prophet and Companions, but also later figures...who are perceived as having revived...reformed...or preserved the vision and norms of true, pristine Islam, and thus as being in continuity and connection with the original community, or *ummah*." William A. Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: an essay in interpretation", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XXIII (1993), p. 500.

¹⁰ The *madrasa*, the traditional Muslim institution of higher learning, has continued from medieval into modern times in much of the Muslim world. On this institution, see *EI*(2), s.v. "Madrasah" (G. Makdisi); G. Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*, (Edinburgh, 1981); R.P. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, (New York, 1985).

¹¹ *ʿIlm al-Kalām* is usually understood as "dialectical (or apologetic) theology", as developed by medieval Muslim theologians. The theologian trained in *ʿIlm al-Kalām* is a *mutakallim*. For the history and major concerns of this intellectual tradi-

tion, see *EI*(2), s.v. “‘Ilm al-Kalām” (L. Gardet); *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, (New York, 1986), s.vv. “Kalām” (G.C. Anawati) and “Mu‘tazilah” (J. van Ess).

¹² The precise nature and extent of Sayyid Ahmad’s influence on Shibli’s thinking is rather uncertain. Shibli himself was rather reticent on this question. In any case, it seems fairly clear that this influence was considerable. Apart from the likelihood that it was through Sayyid Ahmad that Shibli imbibed much of his modernistic inclinations, it appears that Shibli’s particular historical interests too owed not a little to Sayyid Ahmad’s influence and encouragement. On this influence generally, see Murad, *Intellectual Modernism*, passim.; Ikrām, *Yādgār-Shibli*, pp. 82-157. On Sayyid Ahmad’s religious thought, see C.W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: a Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology*, (Delhi, 1978).

¹³ For a discussion of what “reformist” concerns signified for one prominent religious scholar associated with the Deoband *madrasa*, see B.D. Metcalf, “Islam and Custom in Nineteenth Century India: the reformist standard of Maulāna Thānawī’s *Bihishtī Zewar*”, *Contributions to Asian Studies*, XVII (1982), pp. 62-70, especially p. 65: The reformist ‘ulamā’ “were involved in teaching Muslims to be good Muslims and believed themselves to be in the company of great reformers of the past, including the Prophet himself, for whom precisely the ending of false custom and the creation of religiously responsible individuals had been central. They were engaged in renewal (*tajdīd*) of the teachings of the Koran and the Prophet.” Cf. notes 59 and 63, below. For a convenient overview of the entire spectrum of reformism in British India see K.W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, (Cambridge, 1989).

¹⁴ M.A. Syed, “Muslim Historiography”, pp. 192f.; cf. F. Rahman, “Muslim Modernism in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, (1958), p. 85.

¹⁵ Towards the end of his life Shibli founded the Dār al-Musannifīn, an institute for research and publication. (Cf. Sulaymān Nadwī, *Hayāt-i Shibli*, pp. 688-98.) The Dār al-Musannifīn soon became the research and publication wing of the Nadwa itself. According to ‘Alī Nadwī, the Dār al-Musannifīn is probably the first institute for organized research to be established in the Muslim world with the purpose, on the one hand, of countering the intellectual challenge of the West and refuting hostile Orientalist scholarship; and, on the other, of (re)introducing the Muslim youth to the teachings of Islam, to the lives of the Prophet and his followers, and to the Islamic heritage in general. See his address to the international seminar on “Islam and the Orientalists”, organized by the Dār al-Musannifīn in February, 1982, (published separately, and with additions, as) *al-Islāmiyyāt bayna Kitābat al-Mustashriqīn wa’l-Bāhithīn al-Muslimīn*, 2nd edn., (Beirut, 1983), p. 47.

¹⁶ *Al-Nadwa*, (Lucknow), vol. 9, no. 1 (1912), pp. 5-8.

¹⁷ Shibli, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, ed. Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī, 7th edn., (Azamgarh, 1971), p. 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 86ff., and passim. It was in particular the work of the British Orientalist D.S. Margoliouth on the Prophet Muhammad which disturbed Shibli very much, and made him conscious of the need to refute Western scholarly criticisms on the Prophet. Cf. Sulaymān Nadwī, *Hayāt-i Shibli*, pp. 703f. Sulaymān Nadwī does not say however which of Margoliouth’s books Shibli was acquainted with. Margoliouth’s *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*, (London, 1906), must have been known to Shibli, and may have been the only work by him that Shibli knew. It may be noted that while Shibli’s work on the Prophet was intended

to refute Western criticisms, it was addressed not to the Western scholars but to the Indian Muslims, since it were they whose faith was thought to be endangered by such criticisms, and by the impact of Western ideas generally. Cf. F. Rahman, "Muslim Modernism", p. 85. This last observation is hardly peculiar to Shiblī; it holds, in fact, for much of the apologetic work produced by modern Muslim writers in India and elsewhere.

¹⁹ Shiblī, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, I, p. 7; idem., *ʿIlm al-Kalam*, pp. 2ff.; cf. F. Rahman, "Muslim Modernism", p. 85; M.A. Syed, "Muslim Historiography", pp. 192f.

²⁰ Shiblī, *ʿIlm al-Kalām*, loc. cit.; Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, pp. 83-85, 111.

²¹ On the attitudes of medieval Muslim theologians to history, cf. Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History*, (Chicago, 1964), pp. 137ff.

²² Shiblī, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, I, p. 7; cf. Sulaymān Nadwī's presidential address to the annual session of the Nadwat al-ʿUlamā', 1915, published in *al-Nadwa*, vol. 11, no. 5 (1915), pp. 2-15.

²³ Shiblī, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, I, p. 8.

²⁴ A recent Western evaluation of the processes of the collection and growth of *hadith* materials, and the activities of the early experts of these materials, the *muhaddithūn*, is G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, (Cambridge, 1983); a recent discussion of *hadith* criticism, with a thoroughly traditionalist Muslim perspective, is M. Luqmān al-Salafī, *Ihtimām al-Muhaddithīn bi Naqd al-Hadīth* (al-Riyad, 1987).

²⁵ Shiblī seems never to have heard of Ignaz Goldziher, the second volume of whose ground-breaking *Muhammedanische Studien*, (Halle, 1889-90; tr. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, *Muslim Studies*, London, 1967-1971) offered a wide-ranging critique of the authenticity of much of the *hadith* materials. Shiblī must, however, have known the strong reservations of two of his Indian contemporaries, Sayyid Ahmad Khān and Chirāgh ʿAlī, regarding the authenticity of *hadith*. For an account of such reservations see Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, pp. 49f., 59ff. Shiblī's view of *hadith* remained essentially similar to that of its medieval experts, however: he recognized that the corpus of *hadith* comprised much that was unreliable but believed that medieval methods and criteria to distinguish the reliable from unreliable traditions were sufficiently effective, that thanks to such criteria the unreliable ones were recognizable as such, and that the rest could therefore be confidently relied upon.

²⁶ To the sceptical, this would probably appear strange for more than one reason. Given the essentially ahistorical tone and tenor of much of the *hadith*, one might wonder how it could be made the basis of an historical reconstruction. But then, some Western scholars have argued that the earliest *Sīra* literature itself is nothing but exegetical *hadith* (re)arranged in a loosely chronological framework. The latter argument is doubtless exaggerated, though it does suggest an interesting parallel between the methods of the earliest extant *Sīra* (Ibn Ishāq's) and latter-day Muslims apologists writing on the life of the Prophet. For a survey of an on-going debate—largely among Western scholars themselves—on historiographical problems regarding the *Sīra*, see F.E. Peters, "The Quest of the Historical Muhammad", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, XXIII (1991), pp. 291-315.

²⁷ For Shiblī's extended discussion of methodological and related issues, see *Sīrat al-Nabī*, I, pp. 1-103.

²⁸ See, for instance, Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, pp. 77-80; Anis Ahmad, "Two Approaches", *passim*; M.A. Syed, "Muslim Historiography", pp. 152-66; for further references, see note 5, above.

²⁹ Shibli, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, I, pp. 45, 84, 100; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 336-64, for an example of how Shibli bases his argument on Koranic evidence, in this case concerning the battle of Badr.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 8ff., and *passim*.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 21ff., 101.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 25, 26, 33, 99, 156, 444, etc. Also see Sulaymān Nadwī, "Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi aur Sīrat mein 'Ulamā'-i Mustashriqīn ki aik awr na'ī ghalatī", ("On Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi and a New Error by Orientalist Scholars as regards the *Sīra*"), and *idem.*, "Pher al-Wāqidi", ("On al-Wāqidi once again"), in *Maqālāt-i Sulaymān*, Mu'īn al-dīn Ahmad Nadwī ed., (Azamgarh, 1968), pp. 111-65.

For studies on al-Wāqidi, see F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, I (Leiden, 1967), pp. 294-97; E.L. Petersen, 'Alī and Mu'āwiya in early Arabic Tradition, (Copenhagen, 1964), index, s.v.; J.M.B. Jones' Introduction to his edition of *The Kitāb al-Maghāzī of al-Wāqidi*, (London, 1966); also cf. *EI*(2), s.v. "Maghāzī" (M. Hinds). Also cf. the references in note 37, below.

³³ Shibli, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, I, pp. 41ff.; cf. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, p. 79.

³⁴ Cf. Shibli, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, I, p. 46. The classic study of such backward projections in *hadith* is still Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, pp. 38-163.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 33; Sulaymān Nadwī, *Maqālāt*, II, pp. 111-65, *passim*.

³⁶ Cf. the biographical notice on al-Wāqidi in al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdad*, (Baghdad, 1931), III, pp. 3ff. Contrast the almost unqualified praise for him as a historian of the *Sīra* with reservations about his credentials as a sound scholar of *hadith*. But note that the authorities quoted to evaluate al-Wāqidi's position in *hadith* are by no means either unanimous or equally harsh in their criticism.

³⁷ 'A. 'A. al-Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing among the Arabs*, tr. L.I. Conrad, (Princeton, 1982), p. 37. Ironically, Shibli's scepticism of al-Wāqidi's reliability would seem to be shared by some contemporary Western scholars, but for completely different reasons: al-Wāqidi is unreliable simply because all early Islamic historiography is tendentious and untrustworthy; the later and the more detailed and methodologically superior an historical narrative, the more suspect it is. Cf. P. Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, (Princeton, 1987), p., 224. Such an approach questions the very possibility of reconstructing early Islamic history, however; it is not difficult to imagine how Shibli, who was confidently engaged in just such a reconstruction, would have reacted to such cynicism.

On al-Wāqidi see note 32, above. On Ibn Ishāq, see Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, I, pp. 288-90, and the following studies: W.M. Watt, "The Materials used by Ibn Ishāq", in B. Lewis and P.M. Holt, eds., *Historians of the Middle East*, (London, 1962); *idem.*, "The Reliability of Ibn Ishāq's Sources", in *La vie du prophète Mahomet (Colloque de Strasbourg, 1980)*, (Strasbourg, 1983), pp. 31-43; R. Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte: Die Mohammed-Biographie des Ibn Ishāq", *Oriens*, XVIII-XIX (1965-66), pp. 33-91; M.J. Kister, "The Massacre of the Banū Qurayza", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 8 (1986), pp. 74ff.

³⁸ Cf. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, p. 79.

³⁹ *al-Khutbāt al-Ahmadiyya fī 'l-'Arab wa 'l-Sīra al-Muhammadiyya*, (date or place of publication not given in the edition used here). Cf. pp. 364, 385, for Sayyid Ahmad's attitude towards al-Wāqidi. He seems to have regarded al-Wāqidi, and some other historians, as highly untrustworthy, and consequently the source and cause of the many errors committed by Western writers in their work on the Prophet. For Sayyid Ahmad's views on the source material relating to the *Sīra*,

see *ibid.*, pp. 31ff.; on his historiography, see Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, pp. 39f.; M.A. Syed, "Muslim Historiography", pp. 78-101, and Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, pp. 100-143.

⁴⁰ Cf. Shibli, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, I, p. 444; for another illustration of this point, cf. Sulaymān Nadwī, *Maqālāt*, II, pp. 130ff.

⁴¹ Shibli probably intended to devote an entire volume of the *Sīrat al-Nabī* to refuting Western criticisms on the Prophet. Cf. *Makātib-i Shibli*, ed. Sulaymān Nadwī, (Azamgarh, 1928), I, p. 202; also cf. Ikrām, *Yadgār-i Shibli*, p. 433. The idea was later abandoned by Sulaymān Nadwī. However, scholars associated with the Nadwa have certainly not lost an interest in trying to answer Orientalist "attacks" on Islam and the Prophet. See note 15, above.

⁴² The editions of the various volumes of the *Sīrat al-Nabī* used here are: I (7th edn., Azamgarh, 1971); II (4th edn., Azamgarh, 1966); III (4th edn., Azamgarh, 1966); IV (4th edn., Azamgarh, 1968); V (5th edn., Azamgarh, 1964); VI (5th edn., 1969); VII (1st edn., Azamgarh, 1980).

⁴³ It is interesting to note that Sulaymān Nadwī has been criticized for this restrained and not overly zealous treatment of miracles, and for limiting himself only to the more famous of them. See Diyā' al-Dīn Islāhī's defence against such criticism in *Ma'ārif*, (Azamgarh), vol. 137 (1986), pp. 349-72, 426-50; vol. 138 (1986), pp. 25-38, 105-29, 181-204, 268-95.

⁴⁴ Such a shift may well have been envisioned by Shibli himself, though it is likely that were he to write the subsequent volumes there would probably have been a greater responsiveness to his "modernistic" tendencies (and, perhaps, to Western scholarship on Islam too, as distinct from that on the Prophet). Shibli would probably also have tried harder to integrate the discussion of the tenets of Islam into the Prophet's life itself, rather than making it follow as a mere sequel to it. His awareness of the need to discuss the Prophet's message as part of his life is, in any case, indicated already in an earlier work, *al-Kalām*, where Shibli makes the point (*ad* Abu'l-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 983 A.D.), a medieval theologian) that the true proof of prophecy consists not so much in the prophet's miracles as in his character, message and injunctions. See C.W. Troll, "The Fundamental Nature of Prophethood and Miracle: a chapter from Shibli Nu'mānī's *al-Kalām*, introduced, translated and annotated", in Troll, ed. *Islam in India: studies and commentaries*, I (New Delhi, 1982), p. 115.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Sīrat al-Nabī*, IV, pp. 303ff. The idea that the Arabs, for all their vices, had certain inherent qualities which made them suitable to be the recipients of the divine message can perhaps also be related to the view, emphasized by 'Alī Nadwī, that the Arab peoples are the best qualified to lead the Muslim *umma* in the present times. Cf. Abu'l-Hasan 'Alī Nadwī, *al-Tariq ila'l-Madīna*, (Medina, 1965), tr. M.A. Kidwai, *Pathway to Medina*, (Lucknow, 1982), pp. 1ff. (references to the English translation); also cf. Y.M. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, (London, 1990), p. 105; and see note 63, below.

⁴⁶ Sulaymān Nadwī, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, V, p. 2.

⁴⁷ The lectures were delivered, and first published, in 1926, and have been frequently reprinted since. The edition consulted here was published in Karachi, n.d. For an appreciation, cf. S. Sabāh al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahmān in *Ma'ārif*, (Azamgarh), vol. 137 (1986), pp. 119-46; also cf. Khālid, *Sīrat-i Rasūl*, pp. 611ff.

⁴⁸ Mu'īn al-dīn Ahmad Nadwī, *Tarīkh-i Islām*, I (dealing with the Prophet and the Rāshidūn caliphs), (Azamgarh, 1952).

⁴⁹ 'Alī Nadwī, *al-Sīra al-Nabawīyya*, (Damascus, 1977), tr. into Urdu as *Nabī-e Rahmat*, by S.M. al-Hasanī, (3rd edn., Karachi, 1989).

⁵⁰ 'Alī Nadwī, *Pathway to Medina*; see note 45, above.

⁵¹ Cf. especially his *Mādhā Khasir al-‘Ālam bi’-nhiāt al-Muslimīn*, (3rd edn., Cairo, 1959). Between 1943 and 1977, 'Alī Nadwī also produced a five-volume work, *Qasas al-Nabiyyīn li’l-Atfāl* (Stories for Children from the Lives of the Prophets), the last of whose volumes is devoted to Prophet Muhammad. For a brief discussion of this work, see 'Alī Nadwī, *Kārwan-i Zindagi*, I, pp. 215ff. Abd al-Mājid Daryābādī, a renowned Indian Muslim scholar, is said to have characterised the *Qasas al-Nabiyyīn* as an “‘*Ilm al-Kalām* for children”! See 'Alī Nadwī, *Kārwan-i Zindagi*, I, p. 217.

⁵² The editions of the various volumes of the *Siyar-i Sahāba* used here are the following: I: *Khulafā’-i Rāshidin*, by Mu‘īn al-dīn Ahmad Nadwī, (Azamgarh, 1954 edn.); II & III: *Muhājirīn*, by Mu‘īn al-dīn Ahmad Nadwī (Azamgarh, 1951-52 edns.); IV & V: *Siyar-i Ansār*, by Sa‘īd Ansārī, (Azamgarh, n.d.); VI & VII: *Siyar-i Sahāba*, by Mu‘īn al-dīn Ahmad Nadwī, (Azamgarh, 1951 & 1955 edns.); VIII: *Siyar-i Sahābiyyāt*, by Sa‘īd Ansārī, (Azamgarh, n.d.); IX & X: *Uswa-i Sahāba*, by 'Abd al-Salām Nadwī, (Azamgarh, 1950 edn.); XI: *Uswa-i Sahābiyyāt*, by 'Abd al-Salām Nadwī, (Azamgarh, n.d.); XII: *Ahl-i Kitāb Sahāba aur Tābi‘īn*, by Mujīb Allāh Nadwī, (Azamgarh, 1951 edn.). Two other volumes, though not strictly speaking part of the *Siyar-i Sahāba* series, for they deal with the leading Muslims of the two generations which succeeded that of the Companions of the Prophet, are nevertheless to be regarded as sequels to the series, even its part in an extended sense. These are: *Tābi‘īn*, (Azamgarh, 1956 edn.), and *Taba‘ Tābi‘īn*, (Azamgarh, 1959 edn.), by Mu‘īn al-dīn Ahmad Nadwī and Mujīb Allāh Nadwī respectively.

⁵³ An illustration of the importance which the Companions’ lives continue to have for reformist purposes is also provided by the case of the “Tablighī Jamā‘at”—a proselytizing movement initiated in the 1920s by some Indian ‘ulamā’, which now has operations world-wide. A book called *Hikāyāt-i Sahāba* (Stories about the [Prophet’s] Companions), by Maulāna Muhammad Zakariyya (d. 1982), is required reading for those training to become missionaries. Maulāna Muhammad Yūsuf Kāndhlawī 6d. 1965), a former head of the movement, himself wrote a massive work entitled *Hayāt al-Sahāba* (The Lives of the [Prophet’s] Companions), tr. from the Arabic by M.A. Khan, 3 vols., (Delhi, 1989). The latter work is entirely concerned with promoting missionary activity by presenting the Prophet’s Companions as models of rectitude. Cf., too, 'Alī Nadwī’s Introduction to this book, I, p.: “In my opinion, the secret behind [Maulāna Yūsuf Kāndhlawī’s] magic-like speeches [as a missionary] is that he is a great scholar of the...[stories of the] Companions. [Inspired by such stories,...] a vast circle of people has been prepared to sacrifice [their lives] in the way of Allah...”

⁵⁴ 'Abd al-Salām Nadwī, *Uswa-i Sahāba*, (3rd edn., Azamgarh, 1950), I, pp. 1-5.

⁵⁵ Cf. 'Alī Nadwī, *Pathway to Medina*, pp. 41f.: “The patterns of life left by the teachings of the holy Prophet and his Companions [have] continued to throw up men of outstanding worth and merit....It is impossible even to...list...the millions of men of faith...[who] have been coming up in different lands and at different stages of history as a result of this training...”

⁵⁶ See Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. II, pp. 17-251 passim, for a study of political and sectarian controversies as reflected in *hadith*. For a thorough study of the various historiographical tendencies reflecting sectarian and political biases in so far as they relate to one of the most controversial episodes of early Islamic history, the civil war between the forces of 'Alī and Mu‘āwiya, see Petersen, *'Alī and Mu‘āwiya in early Arabic Tradition*. Also cf. W.M. Watt, *The Formative Period of*

Islamic Thought, (Edinburgh, 1973), for a discussion of theological disputes, continuing well into the 3rd/9th century, about some of the events and personages of early Islamic history.

⁵⁷ On medieval biographical dictionaries, see H.A.R. Gibb, "Islamic Biographical Literature", in B. Lewis and P.M. Holt eds., *Historians of the Middle East*, (London, 1962), pp. 54-58; also cf. Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam", p. 509 n. 20 for further references.

⁵⁸ It is interesting to note that while Shiblī also recognized the importance of the Companions' lives as a model for Muslims, he was much less uncritical. See his letter to a friend and colleague, Ḥabīb al-Rahmān Shīrwānī, on learning that the latter was intending to write on the Companions of the Prophet. Shiblī wrote: "Nothing can serve as a better example for us than the life of the Companions. But you must try to tackle all the aspects (involved); and should try to clearly present those dimensions (of the Companions' lives) as well which the *maulavīs* (i.e. conservative scholars with a traditional background and training) try to purposely conceal." *Makātīb-i Shiblī*, p. 119.

⁵⁹ Cf. I.M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, (Cambridge, 1988), p. 725: "To the degree that reformism represents a long-term trend toward the adoption of normative Islamic practices, the modern era has increased the facilities for standardization. The publication, transportation, and communication facilities to reach ever-larger numbers of people have made it possible for the 'ulamā' to teach the common people a high-culture version of Islam."

⁶⁰ See note 11, above.

⁶¹ *al-Nadwa*, vol. 11, no. 5, (1915), pp. 11f.

⁶² Of the numerous writings of 'Alī Nadwī, the following may be mentioned here: *al-Muslimūn fi'l-Hind*, (Damascus, 1952), tr. M.A. Kidwai, *Muslims in India*, (Lucknow, 1960); *Mādhā Khasira'l-'Ālam bi'nhitāt al-Muslimīn*, (3rd edn., Cairo, 1959); *al-Sirā' bayna'l-Fikrat al-Islāmiyya wa'l-Fikrat al-Gharbiyya fi'l-aqtār al-Islāmiyya*, 2nd edn., (Beirut, 1968); *Qadianism: a critical study*, tr. Z.I. Ansari (Lahore, 1967); *The Four Pillars of Islam*, tr. M.A. Kidwai, (Lucknow, 1972); *Khāss bi-Hayāt Shaykh al-Islām al-Hāfiẓ Ahmad ibn Taymiyya al-Harrānī al-Dimashqī*, tr. into Arabic by S.A. Nadwī, (Kuwayt, 1978); *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, 3 vols., tr. M. Ahmad, (Lucknow, 1971-83); *Muslims in the West: the message and the mission*, ed. K. Murad, (Leicester, 1983). Also see notes 1 and 51 above, for references to some other of his works.

⁶³ 'Alī Nadwī, *Pathway to Medina*, pp. 96-98. The works of 'Alī Nadwī, a considerable proportion of which were either written in Arabic or soon translated into it, have, in fact, been considered as a prominent influence on contemporary Islamic "Fundamentalism": cf. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp. 101, 104f; E. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, (New Haven, 1985), pp. 36f., 40, 88f. How much of a "fundamentalist" 'Alī Nadwī himself is, it is difficult to say. He has been careful, for instance, to distance himself from political activism; the minority-status of the Muslims in a Hindu-dominated India is, without doubt, largely responsible for such a stance. His insistence that the Arabs are the natural leaders of the Muslim world, and should assume that role by reviving their Islamic zeal, is a significant assertion: it calls upon them to serve as the vehicle for an Islamic reassertion, politically no less than culturally. The assertion that it is to the *Arabs* that such a role belongs also points, however, to 'Alī Nadwī's concern that the Indian Muslims—of whom he is perhaps the most distinguished religious leader—should stay out of radical Islamic politics. Significantly, in 'Alī Nadwī's understanding, Islam is primarily a system of religious observances and devotional practices

rather than a political theology geared necessarily to the establishment of a theocracy. Cf. C.W. Troll, "The Meaning of *dīn*: recent views of three eminent Indian 'ulamā' ", in Troll ed., *Islam in India: studies and commentaries*, I (New Delhi, 1982), pp. 168-77, especially p. 172. Such an emphasis is, again, understandable in the context of the Indian Muslim predicament, though it adds a further note of ambivalence to his relationship with Islamic "Fundamentalism".

RELIGION: SHAPE AND SHADOW

MICHAEL PYE

Summary

This paper gives the verbatim text of an inaugural lecture given at Lancaster University in May 1992. The first part distinguishes between the “shape” of religion as reflective observers seek to discern it and the shadow cast upon it by the assumptions of the various religions themselves. The second part offers a new view of the “shape” of contemporary Japanese religion, in order briefly to illustrate what is meant by discernment of the shape of religion. The third part sets out a view of Religious Studies for universities which takes account both of the plurality of religions and, without adopting any particular religious stance, of the complexity of questions which arise. A reliable characterization of the phenomena and a steady discernment of the shape of religion are seen as necessary prerequisites for the wider range of explanation, analysis and comment which also have their place. Any threat of control by religions themselves should however be averted.

1 Questions of shape

1.1 Introductory

The title of this lecture, “Religion: shape and shadow”, may have seemed somewhat enigmatic. So thank you for coming. It is not just that alliteration has its own allure; though as my esteemed precursor in this professorship Ninian Smart was wont to say, “phenomenology is fun”. I must admit that some of the classic attempts at a general “phenomenology of religion”, by which authors such as Gerardus van der Leeuw meant a systematic classificatory survey giving a general view of its shape and nature, can hardly be regarded as light entertainment.¹ I shall not be attempting to emulate them this evening.² Rather I shall look at some of the assumptions which affect our mental models of religion, and also at ways in which active religion casts its own shadow upon our view of its shape. Religions themselves are resurgent and influential in many parts of the world. By contrast, the *study* of religion is a relatively frail growth, however bonny it may be in

Lancaster, and I shall therefore be drawing out some implications for the welfare of this discipline. The lecture is a sandwich; the middle section contains some illustration of these questions from Japan.

There is a widespread feeling that the ever steepening curve in the explosion of sheer knowledge about specific religions renders efforts to achieve viable theoretical perspectives quixotic from the start. The more we know, corporately that is, the less we seem able corporately to organise our knowledge. How could we expect to correlate data, systematically, which are drawn from thousands of years of cultural history in all parts of the globe? What has ancient Egyptian funeral practice got to do with tele-evangelism? What has human sacrifice by the Aztecs got to do with the Archbishop of Canterbury's view that senior management should regard itself as providing a service to humanity? What have Avalokiteśvara or uNkhulunkhulu got to do with Yggdrasill? If the mental organisation of such matters is to go beyond mere listing, there are far-reaching theoretical problems to be solved. As a result it is hard to find, for example, an *interculturally based* theory of pilgrimage which commands wide assent. Or again, theory on syncretism cannot be stabilised as long as studies on the Ancient World and Hellenism, on Latin America, and on East Asia (especially China) are carried on in disregard of each other. Moreover at the theoretical level the study of religion still seems to get tossed about like a squashy pumpkin between the humanities and the social sciences, between theologians and cultural historians, between linguists and axe-grinders. Among these there is often little agreement even about the *kind* of theoretical models which should be sought. We are short of good theory in the study of religion. And without theory there is no shape.

In this situation there may arise the temptation to enjoy the flight to our personal interests in one specific religious tradition, to disappear entirely into some specialised philological, textual study, or to pursue just one or two analytical questions to the exclusion or at least the relative disregard of others. Such anarchy may seem attractive, but then it also implies the dissolution of "religious studies" except as a flag of convenience. In this case we would severally coalesce with "independent studies", convert ourselves smartly into "women's studies", or swim lazily and endlessly in

“cultural studies”. Yet, fine though such programmes may be in themselves, would this not be an intellectual failure in the study of religion as such? Would it not be a *worse* fate than the one, sometimes threatened and feared, of being phased out because of the constraints of numbers and funding? Why be concerned about admission figures and research funding in “religious studies” if the subject has no backbone anyway?

1.2 Looking at the shape

Now let us suppose that we are *not* giving up; that we regard religion as a significant feature in history, culture and society, worthy of research in itself, a subject requiring its own special focus. This surely was the intention behind the foundation of a Religious Studies department at this university. Let us suppose then that we wish to go beyond miscellaneous positivism to a more coherent grasp of the subject under study. Let us maintain an interest not only in the history of religions,³ and in the study of the texts pertaining to the various religions, but also in the shape and structure of religion. Such ordered knowledge is after all a prerequisite for the recognition of parallels in the interaction between religion and other social and psychological variables. It is also a prerequisite for the assessment of the claims and demands of religion (usually known in western philosophy of religion as truth-claims and ethics).

If we do not back away from this necessary study, it may be regarded as being something like linguistics.⁴ The latter has of course its own fascinating problems and, as yet, partial solutions. Above all it displays a similar drive towards the theoretical grasp of a subject matter which, in its detail, has all the contingent specificity of the historical past and of the emergent future. New religions, incidentally, are probably coming into existence at a faster rate than new languages, and languages may be dying out faster than religions. One might object that this depends on what is counted as an independent language or as an independent religion, but that only shows how important are the questions of typology and structure, in other words the questions of shape.

1.3 *Religion casts its shadow*

So where is the problem? Surely all we have to do is to work away at the questions we set ourselves, studying the individual cases old and new, overcoming mistakes, getting a clearer view of religions as they are, considering them severally and conspectually, or if you prefer, comparatively, and then sitting back to reflect about them.

“What for?”, did someone say? As we all know, the easy answer is, “For no particular reason except that knowledge is attractive”. In fact religion has been studied, or found funding, for the sake of a wide range of applications like spreading a missionary religion such as Christianity or Buddhism overseas, assisting race relations, promoting mysticism, solving philosophical problems without studying philosophy, developing the intellectual defences of a new religion, defending established religions, trying to stop young people joining religions disapproved of by older people, stopping communism (the steam has gone out of this now), encouraging religion to die out (the steam has gone out of this too), or finding out how to use religion to promote economic development (which is topical in China and explains why less attention is currently paid there to Marx than to Weber).

Thus the study of religion suffers heavily from the ideological attentions of the religious and the irreligious alike. It is not easy, under such circumstances, to achieve steady, uncluttered research and teaching which take the natural range and shape of the relevant phenomena into view. We know that both religion and the study of religion are affected by ideological fashions, but religion and the study of religion are not always on the same side in this regard. *Religion casts its own deep shadow across the study of religion, obscuring its actual shape in many particulars.*

There is a well known but remarkably persistent problem here. Most religious systems trail a view of the shape of religion with them, and this easily leads to perceptions of other religious systems in which the latter do not recognise themselves. To give but one example, classical categories in Christian dogmatics have been the doctrine of God (theology), the doctrine of man (anthropology, as the word has been used to mean), the doctrine of salvation which links these two (soteriology, and specifically christology) and the

doctrine of the last things (eschatology). Now although these categories may be one way of indicating at least part of the shape of Christianity, they are not necessarily so relevant elsewhere. However they have in fact frequently been imposed on religious systems where they are irrelevant, even by non-theologians.

Buddhism for example might be said to have an "anthropology" in the pre-social-scientific sense mentioned above. However it does not have a theology (if theology is about "God") and equally cannot well be described as atheist, for this term is simply irrelevant to Buddhism.⁵ The most one could say is that the miscellaneous references to divinities in its texts amount to a subordinate polytheology. (Polytheology may be a new word, though one can never be sure.) Buddhism also does not really have a soteriology in the sense of there being a process of salvation dependent upon a saviour (soter), even though mythical buddhas and bodhisattvas came to be regarded in the course of time as providing assistance from above. Rather, the Buddha is believed to have discovered and in exemplary fashion pursued the way which all must go if they seek release from the ills of the world.⁶ Nor again does Buddhism have an eschatology, for although a future buddha is expected, namely Metteya/Maitreya, there is never a *last* buddha.

Buddhists on the other hand have their own deep model which allows Christianity to be put into an appropriate slot from that viewpoint. It is based on the polarity between either staying in "the village", that is, the world, occupying oneself with the household life, or going into "the forest", that is, joining the order of monks or nuns to achieve quietude and release. In the main Christianity is regarded as having remained in the world, for this reason displaying its well-known active interest in ethics, politics and economics, which are all less prominent, though not absent, in Buddhist thinking. Christianity is also regarded by Buddhists as having a perniciously specific and obstinate belief system. Christians in turn may regard this as a caricature of their religion.

Those familiar with the subject will know that similar considerations apply to other influential religious assumptions such as those of Islam or Vedantic Hinduism. The general conclusion from this state of affairs is however as follows. *We cannot get a clear view of the shape of religion unless we come out from under the shadow which any specific religion casts upon it.*

1.4 Organisation and perception

This realisation not only has intellectual implications but also organisational ones, and these need to be kept in touch with each other. It is for this reason that I myself take an active part, currently as General Secretary, in the International Association for the History of Religions which, though badly underfunded, is of some importance in mediating between areas of the world where differing models of religion are prevalent. Recent years have seen the foundation of new affiliates, in Indonesia and in Latin America for example. Eastern Europe was participating *before* the wall fell, in spite of different conditions for the study of religion. This year sees the first international conferences of this association in China and in Africa.⁷ Will this not have an effect, in the long term, on the perception of the phenomenon under study? If there is need for a gender-critical approach to the study of religion, there is also need for an Afro-critical approach and a Sino-critical approach; that is, for approaches which allow African and Chinese perceptions of religion to influence our view of its shape.

The practical difficulties confronting an organisation like the International Association for the History of Religions should not be underestimated. The necessary events receive occasional and very modest funding from the International Council for Philosophy and the Human Sciences, which is a UNESCO agency; I take this opportunity to deplore publicly the fact that for many years the U.K. and the U.S.A. have seen fit not to share in funding this agency. I am delighted on the other hand that the secretariat of this world-wide organisation is currently based in Lancaster, which in 1975 itself hosted a major IAHR Congress, and also that its treasurer, Professor Armin Geertz (Aarhus, Denmark) is present here this evening.

I should like to repeat today what I have said elsewhere, namely that the International Association for the History of Religions is not itself a religious organisation. This is sometimes misunderstood by people who would like to use its gatherings as a platform to pronounce a religious message. It is also misunderstood in another way, namely as if it were a tiny closed shop of philologists mainly concerned with its own purity. Nothing could be further from the

truth. Its constitution specifically says that it is open to “all scholars whose work has a bearing on the subject”. In recent years this has certainly meant that it is open to social scientists of various kinds as well as, for example, archaeologists, art historians or specialists in textual studies. Of course all these people do not have the same theoretical standpoint, and they may be, for their own part, religious or not. At the same time their diverse cultural origins and perceptions contribute to an international stabilisation of our perception of the shape of religion. There are also conferences arranged by religious organisations which no doubt play some part here, but they are less likely to do so intentionally. In such cases, although the religiously motivated funding might seem welcome, the real shape of religion will tend to be obscured by the shadow, or shadows, which religion itself casts.

2 The shape of Japanese religion

2.1 Religion and religions in Japan

Coming to the middle section of my lecture, I should like now to discuss just one or two questions of shape in the study of religion with special reference to religion in contemporary Japan. This means the Japan of the post-war period until the present, during thirty years of which I have enjoyed seven years' residence. It is well known that there is a wide variety of religions in Japan, including Shintō ancient and recent, Buddhism including Rinzai and Sōtō Zen Buddhism, but also in other forms of great popular appeal based on the mantra-like utterances *Namu Amida Butsu* or *Namu Myōhō Rengekyō*, a significant degree of Confucian influence, and new religions such as the Teaching of Heavenly Wisdom (*Tenrikyō*) or the Teaching of the Great Source (*Oomotokyō*).⁸ At the same time there is a feeling that these are all in some way part of *Japanese* religion (with the partial exception of Christianity). The question therefore arises: is there a common field of Japanese religion, and if so what does it look like? What is its shape? My assessment is that there is such a common field which has resilience independent of the specific religions which I have just mentioned and which in various ways participate in it.

To give a simple illustration of this, it is customary at New Year to return amulets and other religious paraphernalia to the shrines and temples at which they were bought. They are then burned and new ones are acquired to give protection and ensure welfare in business and in the home, etc., for the coming year. Millions and millions of people perform this practice which is common to Shintō and several forms of Buddhism. However when these millions of people throng to this temple or that shrine they pay scant attention to the origin of the returned items. A wooden tablet bought at a Shintō shrine the last year may easily be returned to a large Buddhist temple. Attendants at just such a large Buddhist temple (Kawasaki Daishi, near Tokyo) have complained to me about the extra work which this involves. This shows that the practice is independent of specific religious teaching, Shintō or Buddhist, and proves (together with plenty of similar evidence) that there is indeed a common field of Japanese religion as mentioned earlier.

2.2 Six ‘themes’ and six ‘dimensions’

One of the most influential textbooks on Japanese religion is entitled *Japanese Religion, Unity and Diversity*, and in it the author, Byron H. Earhart, sets out six ‘persistent themes’ whose recurrence, he says, ‘may be taken as a sign of the unity of Japanese religion’.⁹ These are, in his words: ‘the closeness of human beings, gods and nature’, ‘the religious character of the family’, ‘the significance of purification, rituals and charms’, ‘the prominence of local festivals and individual cults’, ‘the pervasiveness of religion in everyday life’ and ‘the natural bond between religion and nation’.¹⁰

Now everyone who is familiar with Japanese life will feel the persuasiveness of this characterisation. At the same time (as the author might himself agree) it falls short of being a disciplined theoretical model. It is internally disorganised. Note that the second, fourth and sixth themes refer mainly to the social locus of religion, namely family, local community and nation. The fourth contains a sub-problem in that ‘individual cults’ such as the veneration of a specific divinity (whether thought of as a *bodhisattva* or as a *kami*) for success in business, to get over an abortion, for assistance in

examinations, etc., are not tied specifically to the festivals of any one local community. Another mixed bag is the sequence “purification, rituals and charms”. Purifications *are* rituals. Deep down, what these three have in common is that protestants do not do them; is that what brought them together here? The first named theme, “the closeness of human beings, gods, and nature”, is specifically defined “in contrast with monotheistic religions such as Judaism and Christianity”. The author’s background and intended readership are probably responsible for this. On a level view, Islam would be a much better example of a monotheistic contrast than Christianity, with its plastic representations of God in Jesus, widespread devotion to Mary, who has been described as bearing God the Creator in her womb, and saint cults verging on polytheism as in Latin American *santos* systems.

It might be thought salutary to sort out these six themes with reference to Ninian Smart’s more generally conceived six “dimensions” of religion.¹¹ Note that two of these, the “doctrinal” dimension and the “ethical” dimension, are simply absent from Earhart’s characterisation. Earhart is correct here. Neither doctrine nor ethics play a significant part in the common pattern of Japanese religion, although they do in specific Japanese religions. Smart’s “social dimension” occurs three times in Earhart’s themes, as observed already, while the “ritual dimension” is badly limited by being sandwiched between “purification”, which really is also ritual, and the use of charms. The “mythic dimension” might be thought to be concealed in “the closeness of human beings, gods and nature”, but recall that Earhart had contrasted this with theistic theology. This suggests that we might well see the “doctrinal” and the “mythical” dimensions as part of a single continuum. Do they then need to be differentiated at all in the more general model? Further, what might be Earhart’s correspondence to Smart’s “experiential” dimension; would it be “the pervasiveness of religion in everyday life”? Or rather, does not the “experiential” run through social and ritual themes also?¹²

Specialists will be aware that various other models of religion are current, which would all benefit from critical correlation with each other. I observe here for illustrative purposes only that these two extremely influential models of the shape of religion, or of some

religion, lack internal coordination, mix categories unevenly, and cannot be correlated with each other. Admittedly they are differently pitched, one being more specific than the other; but the plausibility of each would have been enhanced if at least indirect correlation had turned out to be possible.

I will spare the complexities which would arise if we tried to correlate either Earhart's themes or Smart's dimensions with other models which arise from specific fields, for example with Jacob Olupona's work on ritual, myth and cosmology among the Yoruba¹³ or with Manuel Marzal's characterisation of Andean religion in his fascinating work *La Transformación Religiosa Peruana*.¹⁴ In effect Marzal proposes *four* aspects or dimensions in what he designates the contemporary Andean religious system: Andean beliefs, Andean rites, the forms of religious organization, and the ethical norms; these have arisen in their detail in three formative stages of specific history since the conquest.¹⁵ Fascinatingly, Marzal appears to have reinvented the study of religion, in Peru, without much reference to the development of the discipline in Europe or North America. It has simply appeared through spontaneous combustion in the interface between Catholic missiology and field-oriented anthropology.

2.3 *Japan's new primal religion*

It is easy to be critical, as tentatively of Earhart above. But are there any alternatives? I restrict myself here to the specific problem of contemporary Japanese religion, which I have frequently observed in the field. Earhart's themes are in effect a "grounded theory", since they too arise out of observation, but they lack systematisation. One way of streamlining a theoretical model is through the correlation of paired concepts.¹⁶ Thus one highly visible common feature of Japanese religion is its calendricity, i.e. normal time is marked by the recurrence of specific, special times such as New Year, but including many more (known collectively as *nen-jūgyōji*). This is matched by the widespread pattern of proceeding, as a religious act in itself (known as *o-mairi*), to a place which is sacred for a specific reason¹⁷, in order to perform further ritual acts.

Time and space are self-evident and too general, you may say.

However this is not just any time and space. The model is more specific than that because it is in the correlated focus of specific, recurrent times and places that religious action takes place. To put it negatively¹⁸, there is no sacred time beyond space, or vice versa; there is no eschatology. But the art lies in recognising the simple pattern which carries all the detail, for example the detail of such conceptual accompaniments as the rituals require. These rituals take place in a network of calendrical and spatial foci which are endlessly enmeshed with each other. In this one network there is a social reality linking individual and group from family through to nation. The social reality is of course matched by the individual's subjective consciousness of the whole pattern which he or she experiences.

A second such pair may be seen in the festivals of life (*matsuri*), celebratory of fertility, harvest, and economic welfare from fishing to the mining industry; and on the other hand the care for the deceased as ancestors (*senzo kuyō*), going back as far as one can remember and then on to the *n*th generation as buddhas and as *kami* (Shintō divinities). This in short is life and death, linking the generations in a seamless social continuum. Note that it is not just a question of any life and death, but the life and death of an indefinite series of interrelated generations.

It would be easy, and indeed true, to say that the links between these two sets of paired concepts are determined by ritual. However this would be too general. The rituals of common Japanese religion are typically a *transaction*, a transaction between human beings and spiritual beings, many of whom were once human beings themselves.

Religions as a recurrent series of transactions in particularised space, regulating and mediating between life and death: this is a simple model. However, as grounded theory, it does not apply to all religion in the world, and is not intended to. It characterises in barest abstraction the shape of what may be called "primal religion" as current in contemporary Japan. More specific religions such as Shingon Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, Kurozumikyō, Tenrikyō, and so on relate each in its way to this contemporary the primal religion. To take all that into account more complex theory would be required.

What is the point of setting forth a theory of this kind? The answer is this. If contemporary Japanese religion does have this shape, there is a major implication for our view of the history of Japanese religion, which is as follows. *Organised Shintō as such is no longer the primal religion of Japan*, even though it contributes to it and draws upon it, and it has not been for a very long time. It may however be regarded as an “adjusted primal religion”. Thus the way we view the shape of religion has a considerable effect on the way we write its story, and this in turn prepares the ground for the assessment of its claims, demands and apologies.

2.4 *New religions and diachronic structure*

“Why can’t religious studies be fun?” demanded the Vice-Chancellor when told that this lecture would be about “the nature of the discipline”. Well, it can be, depending on the selection. That is, it depends on whether you count activities like the recently launched Science of Happiness, now just ten years old, as religion. The founder and prophet is Mr Ryūhō Okawa who, as you may have read in the press, simply abandoned his office desk in 1981 and announced, very persuasively, eternal utopia on earth. (Why don’t our administrators do this?) Today he appears on stage after a laser show, through clouds of evaporating dry ice, dressed “in sparkling yellow robes and a sorcerer’s hat” which prompted one British journalist to try to imagine the Archbishop of Canterbury redesigned by Liberace (*The Guardian*, May 2, 1992). He then gives a loosely designed homily commenting on world events, rather like the analyses peddled by the magazine *The Plain Truth* in recent decades, prophesying the end of the world as currently known. (I hear that new versions of this are available on satellite television.) One might find this entertaining, that is, merely entertaining, until it transpires that the turnover in entrance tickets for a single show (as one may fairly describe it) amounted just recently to nearly a quarter of a million pounds, and that his registered membership is now more than five million “souls” as people used to say in English, or as our journalist put it, five million “hearts and wallets”. This is how new religions start in Japan nowadays, as sometimes in other countries too.

But then the questions start to come, especially from serious people. *Is this religion?* If at all, in what sense? Is it a new religion? What is a “new religion”? Were not old religions once new? Are so-called new religions something to do with recent times, with response to economic and cultural imperialism (Lanternari), with periods of crisis, with the revitalization of the relatively deprived, etc. etc? If the latter cluster of explanations has any force, what of the latest wave in Japan? Are they not “new new-religions”, as the Japanese phrase *shinshinshūkyō* would have it? Are they post-modern, or just post-Olympic (the Olympic games in 1964 represented a certain watershed in Japanese life), or post-Matsushita? Whatever the line of interpretation, peeking into the soul of humankind this afternoon, and scorning the views of yesterday morning, the questions presuppose some view of the phenomenon, the discernment of a shape. Unfortunately the discernment of this shape depends in part on what happens *next*.

Consider a movement begun decades ago by a Japanese pickleseller together with a woman associate who had revelations. After a while the revelations were displaced by a systematic exposition of the laws of the universe based on the Lotus Sutra, an early Mahāyāna Buddhist work of great influence (with which students in our department tend to become familiar). Many years later the founder dispenses his own peace prize, and, as an octogenarian, has just formally handed over the presidency of his several millions strong organization to his son, thus establishing yet another hereditary religious lineage in Japan. This new religion, the Risshō Kōseikai (which means, in unofficial translation, the Association for the Establishment of Righteousness and the Development of Fellowship) has become established, made itself part of the chain of tradition, turned itself into an old new religion (if we contrast it with the so-called “new new-religions”), and claims indeed to be a modern, quintessential form of original Buddhism.

Will Okawa’s charisma be routinised and channelled into such recognisable patterns of Japanese religious activity? Or will it suddenly wither at the second generation, so that the movement collapses in pathetic post-charismatic bankruptcy, like others I have seen? Notice, the shape involves not just the current snapshot of leader and devotees, but also longitudinal shape, or dynamics,

religious dynamics, which demand to be understood, and which in order to be understood first have to be clearly seen.

It may be added that the emergent shape of Okawa's success already seems to be casting a shadow on the future, when he warns, or proclaims, that Japan alone will survive the cataclysm which will soon overtake our planet. "It will slash the throats of the old eagle and the exhausted red bear", he says, "and laugh at ageing Europe. It will use China as a slave and Korea as a prostitute." (Words reported by Andrew Marshall, *The Guardian*, May 2, 1992). Which deep themes are pursued here? Is this a resurgence of the harnessing of religion to those fascist instincts which seem to be available in most places when left unchecked by more rational and compassionate ideologies? Is this a religion which, if influential, would be likely to permit the *study* of religion without distortion?

The focus on Japan as the land-and-people of destiny (bearing in mind the concept of *kokutai*, national entity or body, popular in the thirties) takes various forms in Japanese religion, some more and some less acceptable in international company. The idea that true, purified Buddhism will be returned from Japan to China and India whence it came, as in the Buddhism of Nichiren and his later followers, is not itself ignoble, even if it disregards some of the more circumstantial features of Buddhist history and world affairs. Nor is the idea that peace will spread out from Japan to the rest of the world through a sustained liturgy of prayer for all nations, as in the Byakkō Shinkōkai or White Light Fellowship Association.¹⁹ But these are universalist faiths, the latter founded in our own century by the charismatic medium Master Goi. And what of Shintō in this respect, that most distinctly Japanese of all religions, officially harnessed to the sharpest patriotism in the prewar and war years, but since then disestablished and settling down again in a much more complex pattern of interrelated shrines? Is Okawa taking up where other ultranationalist fanatics left off? Has he moved on to ground which others have preferred on the whole to vacate? Shintō has shifted from its prewar position. It has adjusted, perforce, its shape. Has Okawa decided to inherit its shadow?

2.5 *The wider problem*

I conclude this section by relating it briefly to the wider world again. These examples illustrate that in religion, as in other studies

which partake of historical depth, we are often in a situation where current activities cannot yet be accurately assessed in their relation to the main stream of events. This was understood by the German theologian and philosopher of history Ernst Troeltsch, who argued that the relation of new forms of Christianity to an existing tradition could only be assessed in retrospect, never at the time of their appearance.²⁰ To illustrate, his perspective here would apply to the current debate on the role of women in churches, and in particular the ordination of women. The debate illustrates, for some, the general problem of authenticity or coherence in theological or religious tradition. There are those who worry that the ordination of women to the priesthood could lead to the end of Christianity, as pointed out recently by my friend Professor Ursula King (who is a Roman Catholic) with regard to the Church of England, which she portrays as dragging its feet (*The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 1 May 1992). Since in my personal life I happen to be a member of the Church of England, and I am also in favour of the ordination of women, I could follow this by calling for a wide range of gender-oriented reforms in the Roman Catholic Church. I say this partly so that I may return later to the relation between holding such opinions and doing Religious Studies. For the moment the question is: would such reforms or changes lead to the end of Roman Catholicism?

Although for believers these may be theological questions, I am using them here to illustrate that there is an important *general* problem about the relationship between new religious trends or movements and the existing religious context. In the discipline of Religious Studies as I understand it, this problem is not one to be solved religiously, but rather requires to be observed in comparative perspective and analysed in terms of diachronic dynamics. Religious, that is, religiously normative solutions to these problems may be left to the believers or to those who claim the right to lead them. They are not the responsibility of those who engage in the study of religion as an academic pursuit. On the other hand problems about the recurrent dynamics of religion, comparable as between cases which may be considered, are an important aspect of the morphology of religion. That is, there is a diachronic morphology as well as a synchronic one to be taken into account. This

may seem obvious enough, but it has been largely overlooked in the well known “phenomenologies” of religion. Moreover it breaks down into related sub-problems, such as innovation, syncretism, tradition, about which there is a considerable body of discussion but little theoretical coordination, let alone agreement. It is notable that Latin America provides a rich source of relevant materials and independent theoretical work.²¹

3 The shape of religion and Religious Studies

3.1 Religious Studies is not religious

I return now, in the third part of my lecture, to the question of the nature of Religious Studies with special reference, towards the end, to the number of religions in the world. It must be admitted that Ernst Troeltsch, mentioned above, could hardly bear to separate theology and historical analysis, though he was deeply aware of the tension between these two and was punished for it when the long shadow of dialectical theology obscured his insights. Today it is much easier to distinguish between the development of a theological position or a religious message on the one hand, and the non-religious analysis of religious phenomena, that is, of religions as historical, cultural and social phenomena, on the other hand. Yet this is not to say that all researchers into religion make this distinction adequately, or even, apparently, wish to make it. There seem to be other shadows. Amazingly this matter is still being fought out in specialist journals, partly by old Lancastrians. Here at Lancaster, I believe, we should be clear about it.

If you agree with the trend of my argument you might understandably say: Why should we care about Ursula King’s call to the Church of England, of which she is not a member, or Michael Pye’s call to the Roman Catholic Church, of which he is not a member? And you would be right. It would not be fair to treat you at this point, or students during the teaching process, to a talk about things which on religious grounds I might personally be in favour of, such as (to illustrate!) trains, bicycles, compost heaps, and high taxation, nor things which I am against such as warfare, race discrimination, battery farming, superfluous flying about, or

wasting daylight. The religious studies seminar room does not contain a soap box or a pulpit.

Religious Studies (which I will gloss as *Religionswissenschaft* in order to slip into the grammatical singular) is not religious. I repeat, Religious Studies is not religious. If it were, we would probably have to use the plural form of the verb and say “Religious studies are religious”. Putting it another way, the statement “Religious studies are not irreligious” would be tautologous and redundant, but to say “Religious Studies is not irreligious” is an appropriate declaration of intent, even though it offends our sense of grammar, for Religious Studies should intend to be neither religious nor irreligious. That is, we proceed, as far as university teaching and research are concerned, on the basis of methodological agnosticism, a phrase which I prefer, incidentally, to methodological atheism. And by methodological agnosticism is meant here a procedural device, akin to what in the phenomenological tradition has been called “bracketing” (or *epochè*), which is no doubt recognisable in various branches of the humanities and the social sciences, in either of which Religious Studies may be situated, without strain, for it belongs to both.

Thus while religions and related or otherwise relevant phenomena may together amount to “a field” of study and enquiry, it should not be thought that our normal work consists of just *any* kind of free-for-all exchange of opinions or even prejudices. Rather, this would be play, or a private activity. On the contrary, there is a foundational “discipline” involved, namely the discipline of reliably elucidating religious systems as they function in the experience of believers or participants so that they come into clear view. Not everybody in the world wishes to do this, and probably a great many cannot; all the more reason for those who are employed for this purpose to concentrate on it. The “field” shifts endlessly, following the shifting shape of religion and the variously defined groups of believers, but the “discipline” remains the same, except in so far as it is refined and better applied. I assume that students of Religious Studies are intending to learn this discipline.

One more word is necessary about intentionality in Religious Studies. We do not need to be naive believers in the easy achievement of scientific neutrality to value the *attempt* to remove religious

or other prejudice from description, analysis and theory. The historical and comparative study of religion has been extracted with some difficulty, over a long period, from the distorting influence of unreflected theological assumptions.²² *This achievement is fragile.* Even the older representatives of the phenomenological school in the study of religion were quite strongly imprisoned in their own view of the shape of religion. The comparative surveys which they intended as a general conspectus were strongly marked by deep religious assumptions typical of the family of theistic religions, but not of all religions, notably the God-man-salvation-eschatology structure remarked on above. In the case of Eliadism, the assumptions are a little different but the problem is similar. Surely we should continue to view with critical distaste any distorted views of Religion B which arise because of the prejudicial influence of Religion A. Surely our students may be expected to explore and to understand two or several religious systems in a context which is not dominated by any one of them.

3.2 *Religious Studies is a service*

This means that the study of religion has to come out from under the shadow of religion, and stay out. Religious Studies should continue to be distinguished from Theology and from Biblical Studies, even though these three are grouped together for research productivity assessment purposes by the Universities Funding Council. While considering the current situation in the United Kingdom it may also be noted that traditional departments of Theology are now quite commonly adding the phrase “and Religious Studies” to their name, adjusting to their desired student intake and their potential vocational diversity. Unfortunately it would appear that this pragmatic trend has not always been underpinned by conceptual agreement about the intentionality of study and research. The views of the *shape* of religion implied by syllabuses and staffing arrangements continues to be largely determined by the religious assumptions underlying the earlier institutional foundations. There is a danger therefore of a debasement of terminology, of what is known in German as *Etikettenschwindel*, that is, labelling swindle, meaning packaging deceit. The very success of the Lancaster pro-

gramme of Religious Studies founded by Ninian Smart in helping to get this terminology into the vocabulary of education, including higher education, is today enabling established religion in this country to cast a *shadow* over the still fragile, non-theological study of religion.

This is not said in an anti-theological spirit. On the whole it is probably better for theology, whether it be Christian theology, Muslim theology, Jewish or Sikh theology, or an equivalent discipline in other religious houses, that there should be an independent and open study of religion concerned with its factuality and matters arising. This service is provided by Religious Studies. The knock-on effect of freely ranging studies of religion is admittedly not always regarded as helpful by religious people. On the whole it tends to be bad for obscurantists, simplicists, and frauds. However, the supposedly “ideological” knock-on effects can only be avoided by conniving with such tendencies. In this regard too the *shadow* of religion may inhibit the freely ranging study of religion.

The welfare of a programme of teaching and research in Religious Studies not determined by religion itself is also important for wider reasons. It is important for the teaching profession, for those concerned in various ways with the well-being of a pluralist society within this country, and for any with a special interest in international conflict avoidance. I feel that a country with the traditions and the potential of the United Kingdom should simply provide this service, without regard to commercialised short-termism. As with various other practical arrangements in society, such as sewerage, a long term view is required; privatisation is all right for some things but not for others. Specially funded projects are of course very welcome if the basic programme is assured, but preferably they should come from more than one religious source at a time.

3.3 Religions are miscellaneous

It remains to consider some of the ways in which the perceived shape of religion as a varied pattern of specific religions may have some influence on the organisation of Religious Studies. We have

seen that whether the researcher assents to the religious system under study, or not, does not matter. Assenting or not assenting both have pitfalls for the study of religion, pitfalls which have to be managed by means of self-reflection, as in any academic activity. An obvious pitfall for the integrity of this discipline would be any intention to conceal within it a programme of religious purveyance or propaganda, even of an incidental kind. Equally dangerous, for our discipline, is the solution sometimes proposed of flaunting, with dramatic, so-called “post-modern” honesty, a privately selected religious position which is then advanced with academic tools. This may give an appearance of being “all right” if the religious positions maintained are culturally well established, e.g. Anglican, Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist. But suppose we consider more miscellaneous religions, if the term may be excused? Can this audience really imagine a department of Religious Studies staffed by an engrossed follower of Mr Okawa, a Watchtower and Bible Tract Society missionary, a follower of the Baha’i faith, a Scientologist, an anti-Scientologist, a Unitarian, a Charismatic Methodist, two Sikhs of varying militancy, a Findhornian and a believer in the Turin Shroud, all reserving the right, on the basis of “honesty”, to present their beliefs in class? This would give a staff of eleven. I have criticised the market stall version of Religious Studies before. It is intellectually indefensible because of the large number of different belief systems available. To be able to fund an appropriate array of staff we would have to attract many thousands of students, far beyond the wildest dreams of our Vice-Chancellor.

The fact that religions are miscellaneous has other implications. I have used the example of Okawa’s Science of Happiness (where twenty five years ago I might have taken Taniguchi Masaharu’s Seichō No Ie or “House of Growth”) on the assumption that the majority of my audience on this particular occasion, here in north-west England, cosmopolitan though everybody surely is, might find it interesting while not feeling existentially addressed. *Most religions are more or less unknown to most of us.* Therefore it does not matter too much in practical life whether they are true or false, good or bad, lively or moribund. It is remarkable how callously reflective, even amused, people can be about apparently miscellaneous religions which, for all it affects them, might as well be clouds of vapour on

the planet Venus. At the same time many of their “truth claims” are not so very much odder than those of the heavily established religions, so that an even-handed treatment by our philosophers of religion should really be called for. Why should we take Catholic theology seriously if we do not take the teaching of the Religion of Divine Wisdom (Tenrikyō) seriously? Surely true philosophers are not impressed by the mere number of people who believe in something!

The very variety of religions leads me however to one further point. In a university department of Religious Studies, the staff are supposed to be, I presume, in a sense not so frequently found in English, *scientists* (that is, *Wissenschaftler*, indeed *Religionswissenschaftler*). I have argued that we are responsible for developing a reliable, systematic and, at least to a recognizable and hence debatable extent, objective view of our field of observation. To achieve such a view it is appropriate, even though it may seem like time-wasting to the non-specialist, to be interested in miscellaneous religions which might illustrate some wider feature of our subject. For this we do not need innumerable staff members representing each religion from within. The appropriate way to handle this aspect of our work is to make use of informants from the field, either in the field during fieldwork, or by inviting them into the university.

3.4 *The number of religions is indeterminate*

The number of religions in the world is indeterminate. This is partly because new ones arise and existing ones may decline and disappear, but it is also because it is (healthily) unclear which phenomena should be counted at all. One of Ninian Smart’s preferred examples in this respect was the cult centred on Mao Zedong, whose mausoleum we visited together this very spring.²³ I do have to report that the pilgrimage to the mausoleum from many parts of China is not currently regarded by Chinese specialists in religion as religion.²⁴ This is because officially there is no state religion in modern China. There is however “popular religion”, as government funded researchers seem prepared to admit, with a slightly wry smile. This is the explanation for the use

of Mao pictures to dangle in cars as protective devices. The very widespread use of Mao pictures in this way is said to go back to a specific crash in Beijing in which only the driver with a Mao picture escaped with his life. The practice is also described from an official standpoint as *mihsin*, meaning superstition, a term which like “heresy” and other heavy evaluations has no place in the modern study of religion.

The reason for this reportage is to emphasise my point that the number of religions in the world is indeterminate. It is therefore very difficult to get any kind of relationship between the number of religions which there are in the world and the members of staff in a university needed to research them and teach about them. Intellectually indefensible in this regard is the so-called “world religions” solution, covering a selection of religions presumed to be dominant such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism (here in alphabetical order). In Britain Sikhism is often added (because of the crash helmets).²⁵ These, except Sikhism, are all covered at Lancaster, and the department is even so unusual as to include Catholicism as a kind of honorary world religion of its own, for which there may indeed be some descriptive justification.²⁶ Others add Confucianism, Daoism or Shintō. But “world religions” does not stand up as a concept, and it has recently been taken apart with some gusto by Katherine Young in a bilingual volume of Religious Studies from Canada.²⁷ Apart from the fact that people rarely agree on *which* religions qualify for this status, the main difficulty is that so many are left out that only a distorted view of the general shape of religion is left. Imagine a situation in the world today in which the leading religions were Mithraism, Jainism, Aztec state religion and Catharism. What should Religious Studies then look like?

3.5 *Shape, explanation, issues*

It is time to draw my various threads together. It seems to me that the task of the university specialist in religion is in the first instance to observe and to characterise cases of religion, whether on the basis of fieldwork or textual studies (with due regard to the known hermeneutical difficulties), and so to explicate them that

further thought about them may be carried on in an ordered fashion. These characterisations should in principle be recognisable to the believers or participants in the system under study. If the first stage is not taken seriously there will be no reliable common knowledge about the field, and people who had in some sense claimed to be scientists will end up talking mainly about themselves.

The theoretical problems which first arise in the context of observation are those of *shape*. Attempted solutions to questions about the shape of religion will influence not only further observation itself but also the task of explanation. By “explanation” is meant here the development of theoretical constructs which may come into tension with the self-understanding of the believers, however these specific groups of believers, participants in ritual, text-creators or text-users, may have been defined. Thus it is meant in a broadly social-scientific sense, whether it is focused on questions which seem to be internal to religion such as the structure of innovation in religion *per se* or whether it is related to wider theoretical questions in the social sciences. The “history of religions” should try to take all of this into account.

Following on from the characterisation and explanation there will arise questions of a critical, exploratory, issue-related kind. Some of these have been attended to in that philosophy of religion which has given special attention to the theism of the Christian world. Typically, questions in the philosophy of religion have been based on the relation or tension between revelation and reason; but this is a deeply seated thought pattern which does not occur in all cultures. Explaining it to Japanese students, for example, is quite a difficult task. This matter cannot be pursued further here; suffice it to say that there is no requirement in Religious Studies to restrict the philosophy of religion to those questions which have arisen in the interface between philosophy and theism. As to other kinds of issue-related questions, for example in the field of religion and economics, or religion and the environment, it is better not to leave them entirely either to philosophers or to politicians!

For all the fascination of these more complex questions, the introductory task of clearly viewing the shape of religion is far from completed. In Religious Studies it cannot be ignored. Moreover,

much cooperation, patience and constructive criticism will be required to make further advances in this world-wide undertaking. Mind the shadow!

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¹ Smart also said that though we would not nowadays simply repeat van der Leeuw's phenomenology of religion as set out in his work *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, (E.T. London, 1938), a systematic account would have to be something like that.

² Nor is this the place for a critical review, but c.f. my early publication *Comparative Religion, An Introduction through Source Materials*, (Newton Abbot, 1972), especially the introduction.

³ This means the history of religions in history, not something clinically separated as "religious history", or its great-aunt "church history". To avoid any residual misunderstanding it may be added that the history of Christianity is of course a part of the general history of religions.

⁴ Lessons may also be learned directly from linguistics, as Thomas Lawson, for example, has indicated, but that would be a sub-plot in the present argument. Lawson and McCauley, *Rethinking Religion: Connecting Cognition and Culture*, Cambridge, 1990.

⁵ One may recall the Indologist Helmut von Glasenapp's work published in Britain under the inappropriate title *Buddhism, A Non-theistic Religion*, (London, 1970). I do not know whether he was personally responsible for this; the title of the German original was *Buddhismus und Gottesidee*, (München, 1966). We await the Buddhist answer: *Christianity, A Non-nirvanic Religion*.

⁶ One could use the word soteriological of Buddhism in the much looser sense that it provides a path of release from the world, as opposed to those religions, sometimes called primary religions, which regulate human existence as it is, without fundamentally seeking to free people from it.

⁷ A regional conference of the IAHR took place in Beijing in April 1992 and a similar event took place in Harare in September 1992.

⁸ The romanisation of this name normally follows the practice chosen by this religion itself, rather than the Hepburn system officially preferred for international purposes. In the latter vowels are lengthened by a superscript line rather than by reduplication.

⁹ Earhart, *Japanese Religion, Unity and Diversity*, Belmont, California, 1982, p. 7. The work as a whole is more complex, for it sets out the overall history of Japanese religion in terms not only of these six themes but also of five "strands", that is, specific religious traditions, and three (rather long) periods.

¹⁰ Earhart, 1982, pp. 7-17.

¹¹ As set out for example in *Concept and Empathy*, Basingstoke, 1986, p. 196.

¹² C.f. my criticisms of Joachim Wach, "In reality, 'religious experience' cannot be isolated into any one corner of the total religious datum ...". Probably the singling out of "religious experience" in this kind of way represents the intrusion

of a deeply seated protestant assumption that the inwardness of the believer has a particularly important status: for Protestantism it has, but not for all religion in the same way or to the same extent, *Comparative Religion*, p. 27.

¹³ *Kingship, Religion and Rituals in a Nigerian Community, A Phenomenological Study of Ondo-Yoruba Rituals*, Stockholm, 1991.

¹⁴ Lima, 1983.

¹⁵ Marzal 1983 , pp. 46-63.

¹⁶ It is not a question of binary opposites as such but the achievement of focus through the correlation of leading concepts. For example, the dual relations between the three concepts monarch, sangha and laity, provide a model for understanding Buddhism in some societies.

¹⁷ The reason is very often set out in a foundational story known as an *engi*.

¹⁸ I put it negatively with considerable reluctance and only in anticipatory reply to a potential question.

¹⁹ Treated in my article "National and international identity in a Japanese religion: Byakkō Shinkōkai", in V.C. Hayes (ed.), *Identity Issues and World Religions, Selected Proceedings of the Fifteenth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions*, Netley (Australia), 1986.

²⁰ This was for him a largely theological concern, and was worked out in the essay "What does 'Christianity' mean?" (Eng. trans. Morgan, R. and Pye, M., *Ernst Troeltsch, Writings on Theology and Religion*, London and Atlanta, 1977).

²¹ The writings of Manuel Marzal (Peru) and Elio Masferrer (Mexico), to name but two, provide constant illustration of this.

²² A valuable outline of this process is given in Eric Sharpe's *Comparative Religion, A History*, London, 1977.

²³ In the context of the conference organised by the International Association for the History of Religions mentioned above.

²⁴ I classified the Mao-related journey to Beijing as a pilgrimage during the Cultural Revolution, *Comparative Religion*, p. 41.

²⁵ Sikhism came into the public eye in Britain because of a legal controversy about the compulsory wearing of crash helmets for motor cyclists which many Sikhs refused to do because they regarded it as a religious duty to retain their turbans. Considerable attention has been given to Sikhism over the past twenty years, especially by specialists in religious education.

²⁶ Chinese specialists tend to regard Catholicism (Lord of Heaven Teaching) and Christianity (as Protestantism is collectively called) as two distinct religions.

²⁷ "World religions: a category in the making?" in M. Despland and G. Vallée (eds.), *Religion in History: The Word, the Idea, the Reality*, Waterloo (Ontario) 1992.

STUDIES ON RELIGIONS IN MODERN CHINA

CHEN LINSHU

Survey article

The purpose of this paper is to give a brief survey of the publications on religious studies by academic circles in modern China so as to facilitate academic exchanges in the same field with scholars in the West. Since ancient times China has produced a series of literary works on religious studies, but to regard religion as an object of scientific research resulted mainly from the impact of the 19th century tide of religious studies in the West. The history of religious studies in modern China, beginning at the end of the 19th century, can be roughly divided into four stages, namely: period of enlightenment and initiation, period of creative formulation, period of relative stagnation and period of productive prosperity.

1. Period of Enlightenment and Initiation

The period when academic circles in China started to regard religion as an object of scientific research began at the end of the 19th century and lasted until 1919 in the 20th century. It was closely linked with the tide of momentous changes in modern Chinese history. Exactly at the turn of the century, reformist elements within Chinese national bourgeoisie initiated constitutional reform and modernization, and then the Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution succeeded in overthrowing the Manchurian feudalistic dynasty in 1911. These events were not only inspired and modelled after Western democratic political ideas, they also promoted the assimilation of Western civilization and spiritual values, giving impetus at the same time to a new attitude and approach to religious studies on the part of modern Chinese academic circles. They started to reject the historical tradition of subjectivism in religious studies, and embarked on investigating religion as an object of scientific research. Though this was but the beginning of enlightenment, it constituted an important step forward in the history of religious studies in modern China.

According to the statistics of major Chinese papers and periodicals* from 1878 to 1919, there were altogether 38 published articles dealing

with religion, among them 9 were of the nature of general introduction to religion(s), 6 on the history of religion(s) in general, 6 on Buddhism, 15 on the study of Christianity, and only 2 on the study of Islam. That is to say, in the course of 41 years, the average number of articles on religious studies amounts to less than one per year, miserably scanty and inadequate.

The content and authorship of the articles further reveal that articles dealing with Christianity are by far the greatest in number, and that the authors of the articles are mostly British or American scholars and missionaries rather than Chinese scholars. Among these articles, we have "Jesus Christ" (Yesu Jidu) (1878), "I believe in Christ" (Wo zong Jidu) (1979), "A study of Biblical Lands in the Chronicles of Han" (Shengjing suo zai zhu tu jian yu Hanshu kao) (1882), "On Christianity and the Chinese Academic Changes" (Lun Jidujiao yu Zhongguo xueshu geng-bian de guanxi) (1902), "Origins of the Great Religions in the East and West" (Dong xi da jiao suyuan pian) (1902), "Present Condition of Christianity in China" (Lun Jidujiao zai Zhongguo de xianzhuang) (1906). The brief survey clearly indicates the state of affairs existing in China soon after the introduction of Christianity from the West. It also shows that Western scholars and missionaries began to take great interest in the study of Chinese Buddhism. For example, we have an article entitled "A Summary Study of the Origins of Buddhism" (Fojiao yuanliu zonghe) (1905), signed with the Chinese name Wei Lianchen, and also "A History of Chinese Buddhism" (Zhina Fojiao kao [Shina Bukkyô kô]) (1908), signed with the Chinese name Gao Baozhen. All these articles were published in "International Communique" (Wan'guo gongbao), a Chinese monthly sponsored by British and American missionaries in China. The other eleven articles which appeared earlier were translations of introductory and historical writings on religion. They accounted for over 25 percent of the total number of articles on religious studies. Among them were "The Story of Buddha Sakyamuni" (Shijiamoni zhuan) (1902), "Evolution of Religion" (Zongjiao jinhua lun) (1902), "Psychology of Religion" (Zongjiao xinli lun) (1902), "History of Religion" (Zongjiaoshi) (1902), and "Eastward Spread of Western Religions during the Tang Dynasty" (Tangdai xi jiao zhi dong jian) (1904). All these articles and translations constituted a new approach on religious studies among Chinese scholars at the time. From 1878 to 1919, 38 articles on religious studies were published, among them 13 were written in Chinese by foreign scholars including missionaries, 11 appeared in translations made by Chinese scholars. They comprised a total of 24 articles, accounting for 56 percent of the total number of articles. Articles

on religious studies by Chinese scholars usually appeared at a later date than those by Western scholars.

From the statistics quoted above it is quite obvious that the attitude and approach of treating religion as an object of scientific research is undoubtedly the result of the impact of religious studies in the West and that this historical period is indeed a period of enlightenment and initiation.

2. Period of Creative Formulation

Compared with the earlier stage, religious studies in this period exhibited a marked difference in the relatively great amount of published works on religious studies by Chinese scholars. During the 25 years from 1921 to 1935, 122 works on religious studies were published, including 37 translations, and the average output rose to over 4 books each year. Among them there were 13 books of introductory nature but only 3 of these came from Chinese scholars. They were “Religion-ABC” (Zongjiao ABC), “Materialistic Concept of Religion” (Weiwu zongjiao guan) and “A Popular Approach to Religion” (Tongsu zongjiao lun). The other ten works were all translations such as “General Introduction to Religious Studies” (Zongjiaoxue yin lun), “The Basis of Religion” (Zongjiao jichu), “Comparative Religion” (Bijiao zongjiaoxue), “The Origins of the Gods” (Shen de youlai) and “Religion, Philosophy and Socialism” (Zongjiao, zhexue yu shehuizhuyi). Five books dealt with the general history of religion—among them “Outline of the History of Chinese Religious Thought” (Zhongguo zongjiao sixiangshi dagang) and “History of Religions in Eastern Han Dynasty” (Dong Han zongjiaoshi) were written by Chinese scholars while “History of World Religions” (Shijie zongjiaoshi) and two others were translations. 79 works concentrated on the study of Buddhism, the majority of them were written by Chinese scholars, such as “General Introduction to Buddhist Thought” (Foxue gailun), “History of Buddhist Sects” (Foxue ge zong jiao pai yuanliu), and “History of Buddhism” (Foxue lishi) while “Buddhist Research” (Fojiao yanjiu) and “Buddhist Philosophy” (Fojiao zhexue) were translated works. There were four books on the study of Taoism, among them “General Introduction to the History of Taoism” (Daojiao shi gailun) and “History of Taoism” (Daojiao shi) were written by Chinese scholars, while the other two, “A Brief Survey of Taoist Religion” (Daojiao gailun) and “History of Taoist Religion” (Daojiao yuanliu) were translations from works by Japanese scholars. 16 were written on the study of Christianity, among them “Study of the Nestorian Tablet” (Jingjiao bei kao), “Studies on Church History” (Jiaohui

yuanliu kao) and four others by Chinese scholars, while the other ten including "The Foundations of Christianity" (Jidujiao de jichu), "Christianity and Religions" (Jidujiao yu zongjiao), "Outline of the History of Christianity" (Jidujiao shi gang) and "An Outline of the Bible" (Shengjing gangyao) are translations. There was one book on Judaism, "General Introduction to Judaism" (Youtaijiao gailun), written by a Chinese scholar, while "The History of the Spread of Manichaeism in China" (Monijiao liuxing Zhongguo kao) was a translated work. Two books were published on Islam, the one by a Chinese scholar is entitled "General Introduction to Islam" (Yisilanjiao gailun), the other "Islamic Philosophy" (Huijiao zhexue) is a translation.

The statistics quoted above show that among the 122 books 85 were written and 35 were translated by Chinese scholars. The ratio between originals and translations is 2.8:1. Nearly five originals and translations were published every year, a phenomenon unknown during the period of enlightenment and initiation. It should also be noted that during this period translations of theoretical works on religious studies outnumbered twice the original writings of Chinese scholars. This indicates that Chinese scholars at that time borrowed much from Western scholars in the field of theoretical religious studies.

Judging from the content of the published essays, translations and monographs on religious studies at this period, two distinctive features can be observed reflecting the prominent characteristics of the times, namely: 1. The heavier stress on the critique of religions which is directly related to the initiation of the New Culture Movement with its emphasis on science and antireligious attitude. Essays like "The Evils of Religions" (Zongjiao de zui'e) (1921), "The Evil Religions" (Zui'e de zongjiao) (1925), "How to Oppose Religions in China" (Zenyang zai Zhongguo fandui zongjiao) (1924) and "The Critique of Religions" (Zongjiao pipan) are all products of this period. 2. The more frequent discussion of the relationship between religion and socialism which is closely linked with the impact of the Russian October Revolution and the introduction of Marxism into China. Books like "Socialism and Religion" (Shehuizhuyi yu zongjiao) (1924), "Religion and Socialism" (Zongjiao yu shehuizhuyi) (1930), "The Problem of Religion in the Soviet Union" (Sulian de zongjiao wenti) (1934), and the translation of "Religion, Philosophy and Socialism" (Zongjiao, zhexue yu shehuizhuyi) were all published during this period. The above mentioned two emphases on religious studies were conditioned by the first phase of the changed socio-political situation of that time, while those books published later turned to be more academic in orientation.

3. *Period of Relative Stagnation*

This period covers the years between 1938 and 1979, and can be subdivided into two distinct stages, resulting from the different political situation at the time. The first stage begins in 1938 and lasts until 1949, the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The War of Resistance against Japan from 1938-1945, and the war between Communists and Republicans from 1946-1949 made the social environment very difficult for Chinese scholars to engage in any academic studies. In addition, scholars at this period felt much more compelled to shift their interest and emphasis to the more pressing problems and activities concerning national survival and destiny. The result was stagnation in the academic research on religion.

According to the statistics collected from the major papers and periodicals at the time, from July 1938 to September 1949, 515 articles on religion were published in China, averaging 44 each year (an increase of 1/3 as compared with the previous period), but the number of works on religious studies showed a slight decrease—42 books within 12 years, averaging hardly 2 each year—a decrease of over 50 percent as compared with the previous stage.

According to the statistics, 90 books on religion (including 32 translations) were published during the 30 years between 1950 and 1979. The average yearly publication is 3 books, less than the figure in the 20's and 30's. The Cultural Revolution had brought religious studies by Chinese Academic Circles to a complete halt. That which did find its way to press was merely an example of extremist criticism of religion. During the years of the Cultural Revolution, there were 5 years when (1964, 1974, 1975, 1976 and 1977) not a single book on religious studies was published all over China.

From 1950-1979, publications on religious studies were characteristically orientated on the critical approach. The content or subject matter of these publications includes the following aspects, namely: 15 books on general introduction to religion like "Talks on Religious Thought" (Tantan zongjiao sixiang), "How to Understand Religion" (Zenyang renshi zongjiao), "The Origin of God" (Shangdi de qiyuan); 56 books on critical study of religion, such as "Opposition between the Dialectical Materialistic Outlook and the Religious World Outlook" (Bianzheng weiwuzhuyi shijieguan yu zongjiao shijieguan de duili), "Science Opposes Religion" (Fandui zongjiao de kexue), "Religion and Superstition—and their Harmfulness" (Zongjiao mixin ji qi weihai), "To Expose the Mysteries of Demons and Gods" (Jielu guishen de mimi), "Elementary Introduction to Atheism" (Wushenlun qian tan); 8 books n

the study of Buddhism, such as “Introduction to Historical Records of Chinese Buddhism” (Zhongguo Fojiao shiji gailun) and “Buddhism in India” (Yindu Fojiao); 3 books on Taoism, such as “Historical Studies on the Development of Taoism” (Daozang yuanliu kao), “The Heavenly Master Zhang” (Zhang tianshi); 3 books on Christianity, among them “Outline of the History of Christianity” (Jidujiao shi gang); and 5 books on Islam, including “Discourses on the History of Islam” (Yisilanjiao shi hua). From the content and subject matter of the publications, it is apparent that they centered on the critique of religion and superstition. This had much to do with the characteristics of the domestic situation of China at that period, namely: Firstly, the land reform right after the founding of the People’s Republic gave the peasants the much desired land while religious idols and images fell into disrepute and were soon demolished throughout the country. Secondly, the execution of religious reforms right after the founding of the People’s Republic. For instance, reforms were carried out in Buddhism, Islam and Taoism with a view to abolishing feudal systems. In Christianity (Protestant, Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox alike) the “Three Self Movement” (Self-independence, Self-support and Self-propagation) was initiated in order to clear off the remnants and influences from the old system. Thirdly, the nihilistic attitude of the total repudiation of religion prevalent at the time of the Cultural Revolution. Fourthly, the lack of a clear distinction between religion and superstition in the minds of most people. All these factors unavoidably affected people’s attitude towards religion, giving rise to extremist thoughts and feelings. And that is why the Chinese academic circles in those years made more negatively critical statements rather than unbiased academic works of research on religion.

The facts mentioned above demonstrate that this period is marked by relative stagnation in religious studies. It went through two stages, resulting mainly from the specific sociopolitical conditions existing at the time.

4. Period of Productive Prosperity

In February 1979, a “National Planning Conference of Religious Studies” was held in Kunming. And this marked the beginning of the period of productive prosperity in this field. At the conference, four major tasks were set for religious studies hereafter, namely: 1. to institute a Marxist religiology in China; 2. to conduct an intensive reinvestigation of the history and present status of all religions in China; 3. to strengthen the research on the history, theory and present condition of all world

religions, particularly the three great religions, and to elucidate the relationship between religion and philosophy, literature, arts, science and other cultural domains, and world history; and 4. to take active measures in training personnel and establishing theoretical bases for religious studies. This long-term plan has laid the foundation for the future prosperity of religious studies in the country.

In accordance with this plan, institutes of religious studies were founded and the training of personnel for religious studies well-defined. In the 60's the Institute of World Religions in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was the only institution of religious studies in China. But since the late 70's and early 80's, institutes of religious studies were successively established at Sichuan University, Nanjing University and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. By now, institutes and research centers have been set up in many other universities and academies of social sciences on provincial and municipal levels, and not a few institutes have admitted graduate students heading for Master's degrees. The Institute of World Religions in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the Institute of Religious Studies in Sichuan University have even enrolled doctoral graduates. In the Department of Philosophy in both Beijing University and Nanjing University courses of religiology were instituted, and students were sent abroad (including those at their own expenses) to the U.S.A., Germany, Canada and U.K. to pursue doctoral studies, and some of them have already returned to engage in research on religious studies.

The government has laid down a specific five-year plan in which the state has stipulated that religious studies constitute a part of the research project in the overall state-subsidized research project on philosophy and social sciences. In addition, the state has other yearly plans such as the "Research Project Subsidized by the Chinese Social Sciences Foundation" and the "Research Project Subsidized by the Youth Social Sciences Foundation" together with other research plans sponsored by the State Commission of Education. Religious studies are carried out according to the state plan but allowing free choice on the part of scholars concerned. State plans, including the projects sponsored by the Commission of Education, are basically formulated with regard to priority according to practical needs. Free Choice of research projects by individual scholars is determined by the scholars expertise and interest. Individual research projects can also enjoy state financial support if they are duly submitted for approval and finally included in the state research projects. This has played a very important part in the flourishing of religious studies in recent years.

Since 1980, the state (including the State Commission of Education) has laid down 3 five-year plans on the research in philosophy and the social sciences, in which plans for religious studies have been included. The first five-year plan (in the field of religious research) covers the period from 1981 to 1985. The plan for this period stresses the history of development and the basic tenets of the major religions in China (Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Islam and also atheism). The following are incorporated in this plan, namely the first four volumes of: "The History of Chinese Buddhism" (*Zhongguo Fojiao shi*) in five volumes edited by Ren Jiyu; the first two volumes of "The History of Chinese Taoism" (*Zhongguo Daojiao shi*) in four volumes edited by Qing Xitai; "The History of Islam in China" (*Zhongguo Yisilanjiao shi*) (1990) edited by the Institute of World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; "Principles of Religious Studies" (*Zongjiaoxue yuanli*) edited by Chen Linshu (1986 edition and 1988 revised edition) and "General Introduction to Religious Studies/Religiology" (*Zhongjiaoxue tonglun*) (1990) edited by Lü Daji. The plan for the period 1986-1990 is directed towards the branch sciences in religious studies and the current problems of religions in contemporary China. The publications of this nature include: "Problems of Religion in the Socialist Period of China" (*Zhongguo shehuizhuyi shiqi de zongjiao wenti*) (1987) edited by Luo Zhufeng, "Philosophy of Buddhism" (*Fojiao zhexue*) (1989) by Fang Litian, and "General Introduction to Religious Sociology" (*Zongjiao shehuixue tonglun*) edited by Chen Linshu. Books in this category to be published soon include "Contemporary Religions in China (*Dangdai Zhongguo zongjiao*) co-edited by Qian Anjing and Chen Linshu, the multi-volume "Data Bank and Researches on Chinese Primitive Religions" (*Zhongguo yuanshi zongjiao yanjiu ji ziliao congbian*) edited by Lü Daji (to be published in separate volumes consecutively). The Plan for the 1991-1995 period has also been formulated with the emphasis on the following seven items: Research on Religious Theory and Atheism, Religious Philosophy, Religious Ethics, Religion and Politics, Contemporary Religious Theory, Tibetan Buddhism, Survey on the Present Situation and Reform of Religions in China, Research on the Problems of Religion in the (former) Soviet Union, East European Countries and the Middle East. The five-year plan of this period will serve as the central nervous system and principal channel for all religious studies, helping to grasp the practical needs and current tendencies and therefore giving guidance to the free studies by individual scholars. All the other projects outside these fields can obtain state financial support after submitting application by the scholars while those works which ask for no state financial support can be freely published by the authors themselves.

The number of books and essays on religious research published in this period since 1980 is much greater than that in the previous periods. From 1978 to 1990 196 books on religious studies were published, averaging 15 each year during those 13 years. From 1979 to 1990, 2731 articles were carried by the major papers and periodicals, averaging 228 each year in those 12 years. It should also be especially noted that most of the books published appeared in the form of book series. For instance, “Religion and Culture Series” (*Zongjiao wenhua congshu*) was published by China Today Press and “Culture, Religion and Man Series” was published by Jilin Culture-History Press. In addition, there were also series of well-known religious masterpieces in the West such as “Religion and World Series” (*Zongjiao yu shijie congshu*) by Sichuan People’s Publishers which emphasises Western Works of later periods, and “Western Academic Translation Series” (*Xifang xueshu shi congshu*) by Shanghai People’s Publishers which concentrates on Western classics. Apart from these, periodicals were organized exclusively for the publication of articles on religious studies. Two of them have obtained formal state registration, they are: “Studies in World Religions” (*Shijie zongjiao yanjiu*) sponsored by the Institute of Research in World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and “Religious Studies” (*Zongjiaoxue yanjiu*) sponsored by the Institute of Religious Studies at Sichuan University. There are also a number of not yet registered periodicals aimed at promoting domestic and public exchange in this field, such as “Research on Contemporary Religions” (*Dangdai zongjiao yanjiu*) issued by the Institute of Religious Studies at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, “Religion” (*Zongjiao*) issued by the Institute of Religious Studies at Nanjing University, “Studies on Yunnan Religions” (*Yunnan zongjiao yanjiu*) by the Yunnan Provincial Academy of Social Sciences. Apart from all these, religious organizations in China have also published their own periodicals, such as “Fayin” by the Buddhist Association, “Chinese Muslim” (*Zhongguo Musilin*) by the Islamic Association, and “Tian Feng” by the Chinese Christian Association, “Chinese Catholicism” (*Zhongguo Tianzhujiao*) by the Chinese Catholic Association, “Review of the Nanjing Theological Seminary” (*Jinling shenxue zhi*) by the Nanjing Theological Seminary, and “Chinese Taoism” (*Zhongguo Daojiao*) by the Chinese Taoist Association. All these periodicals aim at studying religion from the standpoint of the faithful, but they all have played a constructive part in promoting religious studies from respective angles.

Religious studies by Chinese academic circles have exhibited the following characteristics:

1. Marxism is the guiding ideology and methodology in the research. But, to the contemporary Chinese scholars, Marxism is no longer a rigid

dogma to be accepted to the letter. Rather, Marxism is regarded as the guiding ideology with which religious phenomena are to be scientifically studied so as to arrive at a correct and unbiased evaluation of religion. To every particular researcher, bias and one-sidedness in religious studies is bound to emerge, but this can be overcome by further studies, academic discussion and historical verification so that the conclusions can be scientifically modified and raised to higher levels. Before 1980 "Religion is the opiate of the people" used to be the cornerstone of Marxist theory of religion, but now the Chinese academic circles have found the idea inadequate. Similarly, religion used to be thought as the absolute opposite of science, but now this idea, which runs counter to historical facts, has been changed. Although the basic contradiction of the two should be kept in view, their identity must never be lost sight of. Again, religion used to be regarded as antagonistic to socialism, but now the emphasis is put on the adjustment and coordination between the two while their disharmony is also recognized. Because of this "Harmony and Coordination Between Religion and Socialism" was made the central topic at the National Conference of Religious Studies held in October 1992 at Sichuan University. In short, religion is now studied by Chinese academic circles as a cultural phenomenon, and in so doing they have rid themselves of one-sidedness in religious studies, adopting a relatively more objective and historical attitude in their research.

2. A more active and scientific attitude has been adopted in learning and borrowing from the results of religious studies in foreign countries and also in promoting international academic exchange. In the West, religion has long since been made an object of scientific research. In the early 80's Chinese scholars keenly felt our backwardness in this respect, and so they started to introduce a large amount of books on religion from the West, mostly translations. They also introduced book series on writings by Western scholars in this field. It is now universally acknowledged by Chinese scholars that Marxism is still an open system. Any theory which approaches religious studies with a scientific and true-to-fact attitude should be included in the category of Marxist theory of religion, among it the results obtained by Western scholars. To most of the Chinese scholars, Marxism is not a sectarian theory. They are anxious to engage in active research and extensive exchange with foreign colleagues in this field. The reciprocal invitations for visits and exchange have already yielded very positive results.

The counsel-centers of social sciences in the six universities (Beijing University, Fudan University [Shanghai], Huadong Normal University [Shanghai], Sichuan University [Chengdu], Nankai University [Tianjin], Wuhan University) appointed by the State Commission of Education

have allotted special funds each year for the introduction of large quantities of Western academic writings, including those related to religion. Sichuan University has made religious studies one of its key disciplines, and so the counsel-center of Sichuan University has given the importation of Western writings on religion priority in its plan of importation. All these forms of international academic exchange are bound to play an even greater part in bringing about prosperity in academic religious studies.

3. The Chinese academic circles are guided by the spirit of "letting a hundred schools contend" in the field of religious studies. For instance, in the all-China bid for the "Sociology of Religion" project, the Institute of Religious Studies at Sichuan University won the bid at the beginning. But, at the second bid, the Institute of World Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences also secured a share in the project. Thus, the same research project was shared by different units. This proves to be inductive to the development of research through academic contention and competition. At present, there exists divergence and even contention in many theoretical problems in religious studies, such as the essence of religion, the definition of religion, the function of religion, the social function of religion, the classification of religion, the constituent elements of religion and the historical forms of religion. All these problems have been brought forth full-scale, in depth discussion and helpful arguments in a number of religious academic conferences. This will play a positive part in the prosperity of religious studies.

From what we have already stated, the author believes that the Chinese academic circles will be able to make their contribution in the field of religious studies, together with the colleagues of other countries.

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* All figures and statistics in this article are taken from:

¹ "Index of philosophical essays on all major papers and periodicals in China from 1900-1949", co-edited by the databanks of the departments of philosophy at Sichuan University and Fudan University, published by Commercial Press in 1988.

² "General Catalogue of Books in China from 1911-1935", published in 1935 by Shanghai Life Bookstore.

³ "Catalogue of Books published in China during the War of Resistance against Japan", the section of Chinese editions, published by the Library of Sichuan University in April 1984.

⁴ “Index of Essays on Religious Problems carried by Papers and Periodicals in China”, published in No. 2 each year from 1979-1991. “Data of World Religions”, sponsored by the Institute of Religious Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

MIRRORS, NOT WINDOWS:
SEMIOTIC APPROACHES TO THE GOSPELS

HANS G. KIPPENBERG

Review article

“New Testament studies are in danger of forfeiting their place in the academy by failure to keep up with current discourse about religion” (Burton Mack: in Kloppenborg/Vaage 1992 p. 37).

- The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 Volumes. Edited by David Noel Freedman. Doubleday New York 1992.
- DAVID L. BALCH (ed.), *Social History of the Matthean Community. Cross-Disciplinary Approaches*. Fortress Press Minneapolis 1991 ISBN 0-8006-2445-9
- PHILIP FRANCIS ESLER, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts. The Social and Political Motivation of Lucan Theology*. Cambridge University Press 1987. Reprinted 1989 ISBN 0-521-38873-2 (pb)
- SEAN FREYNE, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels. Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations*. Fortress Press Philadelphia 1988 ISBN 0-8006-2089-5
- JOHN S. KLOPPENBORG/LEIF E. VAAGE (eds.), *Early Christianity, Q and Jesus. Semeia 55* (1991) Atlanta 1992
- BURTON L. MACK, *A Myth of Innocence. Mark and Christian Origins*. Fortress Press Philadelphia 1988 ISBN 0-8006-2113-1
- BURTON L. MACK, *The Lost Gospel. The Book of Q & Christian Origins*. Harper San Francisco 1993 ISBN 0-06-065374-4
- J. ANDREW OVERMAN, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism. The Social World of the Matthean Community*. Fortress Press Minneapolis 1990 ISBN 0-8006-2451-3
- VERNON K. ROBBINS, *Jesus the Teacher. A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (1984). Paperback Edition Fortress Press Minneapolis 1992 ISBN 0-8006-2595-1
- WILLIAM R. SCHOEDEL, *Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochien. Ein Kommentar* (English 1985). Chr. Kaiser Verlag München 1990 ISBN 3-459-01836-4
- GERD THEISSEN, *The Gospels in Context. Social and Political History in the*

Synoptic Tradition. Translated by Linda M. Maloney. Fortress Press
Minneapolis 1991 ISBN 0-8006-2499-8

Progress in academic studies depends on identifying and solving problems not only on purely theoretical considerations. If new data or aspects require scholars to revise their scientific tools will methodology itself merit scholarly reflection. This at least was the view put forward by Max Weber.¹ In the present situation it is worthwhile recalling his opinion. Issues of theory and method are currently highly valued in religious studies. But there is an inclination to deal with them regardless of their benefit for historical and anthropological investigations. Therefore we should carefully pay attention to cases in which problems of understanding and explaining religions force a revision upon scholars.

That the study of early Christianity could stimulate this revision will meet with surprise—certainly among European historians of religion. Many of them have removed Christianity from their primary concern and regard it more or less as an extraterritorial area. They do not expect methodological or theoretical progress by studying the Christian religion. But an exciting discovery and a shift in the dominant point of view in the study of the Gospels contradict this expectation. Today scholars of the New Testament have placed questions of method high on their agenda. If students of religion listen to them they will find themselves involved in reflections relevant also for their discipline.

The discovery of a new Gospel

Theology and ethics were diverse already in the very early history of Christianity, as Walter Bauer had amply demonstrated 60 years ago. The findings of old Christian texts in Nag Hammadi and elsewhere have justified his view. In 1945 a whole library with thirteen codices containing 52 tractates was found near Nag Hammadi in Egypt. The codices had been concealed there in the fourth century A.D.² Among the tractates a Gospel of Thomas was found: a collection of 114 sayings of Jesus. Its existence in earlier times is assured by fragments of the text on papyri of the 2./3. century A.D. and by quotations of the church fathers Hippolytos, Origenes und Eusebius. After the discovery the entire book was available, though in a Coptic translation from a Greek original.

In 1964 James Robinson compared this Gospel of Thomas with the Sayings Source called Q that Matthew and Luke had used together with Mark when writing their own Gospels. He discovered that both belonged to the same literary genre.³ Sayings of the Lord (*logia kuriou*) were mentioned by Papias (Eusebius, *historia ecclesiae* II 39,1) as a tradition of its

own (cp. 1. Clemens 13,1f; 46,7f). Similar references can be traced back to the writings of the New Testament as Mk 13,31; Lk 24,44; Acts 20,35 demonstrate. Robinson called these collections of sayings by referring to Prov. 22,17 *logoi sophōn* ("words of the sages"). About 35 % of Jesus words in the Gospel of Thomas have parallels in Q. Q had been more than only an additional source for the synoptic Gospels. In fact it had been a Gospel of its own with an emphasis on Jesus as teacher of wisdom. The sayings in this book do not refer to his crucifixion and resurrection as saving events.

Closely connected with this discovery there was a shift in theory. The new edition of the Anchor Bible Dictionary contains all the necessary information regarding recent American investigation into the bible. Take for example the article by C.M. Tuckett about 'Q (Gospel Source)' in Volume 5 p. 567-572. The dictionary contains many articles written in a religio-historical perspective which help to integrate Christianity into the academic study of religions. For this reason it is an extremely valuable handbook for historians of religions interested in this adjoining area. Reading the pertinent articles one is struck by a certain shift in the understanding of the Gospels. To say it in a useful metaphor I found with Sean Freyne (1988 p. 9): these scholars do not treat the Gospels as windows through which a picture emerges of the past world of Jesus of Nazareth. They read them as a creative production of a fictional world that functioned as a mirror for the reflections of author and readers of the gospels.

Discursive meanings

The new approach was tested in 1984 by Vernon K. Robbins in his book 'Jesus the Teacher. A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark'. In the introduction to a paperback edition in 1992 the author recalled the circumstances that had induced him years ago to change the approach to the Gospel of Mark. When Mark related Jesus' mission in Galilee he wrote: Jesus preached in "their synagogues" (1,39). These words imply a certain state of the relations between Christian Jews and Jewish synagogues and belonged to the time of the author, not of Jesus. The current situation is present in Mark's account of the past events. Robbins compared the rhetoric means of Mark with the means used in other ancient texts and revealed a social relation between the author and his readers.

Not by chance V.K. Robbins referred to Clifford Geertz as one of his authorities in stressing the discursive meanings of texts and world-views (1992 p. XXVII-XXVIII; p. 5-6). The semiotic model Geertz has applied to the analysis of culture could become as attractive in the history of

religion as it is already in historical studies. Semiotics has distinguished between semantics, pragmatics and syntactics. For Geertz propositional statements are not defined by semantics only (the correspondance of statement and fact) but also by pragmatics (meanings attributed to statements in situations of communication) and by syntactics (the formal rules governing the structure of utterances). An anthropologist describing social interaction has to pay attention to these different modes of meaning in communication. This distinction has now entered the study of the synoptic Gospels. The anachronistic talk about "their synagogues" in Mark 1,39 testified to the power of pragmatic meanings in the stories about Jesus Christ.

The author of the Gospel of Mark not only conversed with his imagined reader. Sometimes he also referred to other texts known to him. V.K. Robbins called this phenomenon "intertextuality" (1992 p.XX). Burton L. Mack explained it later as follows: "Intertextual composition is a modern notion, coined to designate the way in which a given piece of literature treats its precursor texts and relates to contemporary patterns of discourse".⁴

This approach stimulated new research. Two studies by Burton L. Mack, teaching New Testament at Claremont, can serve as examples. Other studies by J. Andrew Overman addressing the Gospel of Matthew, Philip Francis Esler that of Luke and Gerd Theissen on the synoptic gospels can be added. I do not intend to explain and examine their results in detail. That is done by experts in the field. I would like to restrict myself to the reflection of method accompanying the shift in approach. In this regard the study of Mack is extremely helpful.

Mack has written about the two oldest documents of early Christianity: the gospel of Mark and the book Q. Written in a modest, lucid style he addresses the central problem of the gospel of Mark: "Scholars have not been able to establish any necessary connection at all between what is known about Jesus' activity in Galilee and what must have happened in Jerusalem" (1988 p.10). Mark brought together two distinctively different patterns of written material that was representative of two major types of early sectarian formation: One cultivated the memory of Jesus as teacher, the other the death and resurrection of him as the founding event (p. 11).

Like Robbins, Mack regards rhetorical elements in the Gospels as a bridge from literary analyses to questions about their social function. In one among many other footnotes addressing fundamental issues he dealt with this advantage of "Rhetorical criticism" (p. 18 n. 7). To say it in the words of J. Habermas: The traditions about Jesus and his disciples are characterized by a twofold structure: they give an account of past events

and they insert in them meanings deriving from the present situation of the author and his imagined reader. To make this theoretically plausible Mack turned to recent approaches to the understanding of religious articulations. In particular the works of Jonathan Z. Smith teaching at Chicago inform his study (p. 20 n. 9). For Smith there is no tradition without an interpretation of it. By interpreting it the recipients of a tradition define their place in the world. Sometimes this definition is utopian, sometimes locative.⁵ Both interpretations are achievements of religions. From this point of view B.L. Mack analysed the gospel of Mark and the Sayings Source Q and opened new vistas of the long and dark period between the life of Jesus about 30 A.D. and the composition of Mark about 70 A.D.

Reforming Jewish Synagogues

The Gospel of Mark was composed of various older materials. Besides the story of the Passion, parables, apophthegms and miracle stories were among his sources. It is important to recognize that Mark and Q do have materials in common. About 43 verses of the approximately 200 assigned to Q (roughly 22%) overlap with Mark.⁶

Mack directed his attention to the sources of Mark. They betray interpretations of their recipients. Take e.g. the numerous (exactly 32) anecdotes, called apophthegms or *chreia*. Their use was established practice in ancient philosophical schools. They conveyed the messages of their philosophers to their adherents in a nutshell.⁷ In contrast to the *logia* of Q they contained two elements: an account of a situation and a typical word of a sage related to it. Mack calls them "Pronouncement stories". The bulk of them contained elements of controversy between Jesus and other Jewish leaders. A comparison with the philosophical *chreias* discloses some surprising similarities with the typical Cynic one. Take as an example Mk 2,15-17. It has had the structure of a Cynic *chreia* and used the same kind of logic. The original *chreia* read: "When asked why he ate with tax collectors and sinners, Jesus replied, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are ill'". Jesus' response shifted the order of discourse from the social to the natural (Mack 1988 p. 179-184). The parables had a similar logic. The parable of the good Samaritan cancelled out the conventional view of things, reversing patterns of expectation (Mack 1988 p. 143-145). A further support comes from the Sayings Source imagining Jesus as Cynic-like sage (Mack 1993 p. 114-121).

The Jesus people contested by the *chreia* Mk 2,15-17 the Pharisaic demand, that table fellowship requires ritual purity of all participants.

Analyzing a *chreia* that was expanded (Mk 7,1-23) Mack shows, how differences in matters of ritual purity aggravated the conflict between Christians and Pharisees. The Pharisees who do not eat unless they wash their hands are accused by Christians of observing the tradition of the elders (7,5) and honoring God with their lips only, not with their hearts (7,6v) “You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the traditions of men” (Mk 7,8) (Mack 1988 p. 189-192). The expansion of the original *chreia* sheds light on a Synagogue reform movement in first century Judaism that firmly opposed the Pharisees. The split between Christians and Jews has not yet occurred, but the break between both Jewish groups is deep. The miracle stories show a similar situation. Jesus’ healings are crossing ritual and social boundaries: a Gerasene (Mk 5,1-20), an unclean women and a child (Mk 5,21-48), a blind (Mk 8,22-26), a daughter of a Syrophenician women (Mk 7,24-30), a deaf-mute (Mk 7,32-37). Jesus commands the sea and feeds the crowd as Moses had done (Mk 4,35-41; 6,34-44; 6,45-51; 8,1-10). He is the founder and leader of a new community like Moses and Elijah (Mack 1988 p. 208-245 in particular p. 223v).

Explaining the failure of reform

As long as the Pharisees had not yet become the dominant leading force in Judaism, Christians could form in the Jewish synagogues of Judea and Syria a reform movement. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 the situation changed. The Pharisaic movement ascended, the Christian failed. This experience, Mack tells us, led to a shift in the understanding of Jesus Christ. Christians now told the story of Jesus in terms of the suffering righteous. The Gospel of Mark is completely dominated by the passion narrative. Mack subscribes to the assertion of G.W.E. Nickelsburg—repeated by Nickelsburg in his articles ‘Passion Narratives’ und ‘Resurrection’ in the *AnchBD*—that the passion narrative belongs to a literary genre of stories about the persecution and vindication of a wise or righteous protagonist. He is persecuted as the target of conspiracy, consigned to death, rescued, and at the end vindicated. In Mark the death of Jesus is only incidentally seen as propitiary sacrifice (Mk 10,45; 14,24). His death is primarily understood as the suffering of the righteous, his resurrection a proper reward for a noble death as in 2 Macc 7,14 promised. By describing the fate of Jesus in terms of this genre and by explaining the destruction of the Temple as a consequence of his suffering the Gospel of Mark created a Christian myth of origin. According to Mack

the structure of the gospel of Mark and the ascendancy of Pharisaic Judaism were two sides of the same coin.

Mack's recent book extends his reconstruction of early Christian world-view by including the book of Q. It confirms his assumption that the Jesus-traditions were subjected to a radical re-interpretation. While in an older layer of the Sayings Gospel of Q Jesus words were acknowledged as the sayings of a sage similar to a Cynic philosopher, a younger stratum regarded him as a prophet uttering apocalyptic warnings (1993 p. 47-48).

The analysis of Mack is intensely discussed by biblical scholars. For a historian of religion it opens new vistas. Mack has introduced at a crucial point of his study methods of the history of religions into the analysis of religious texts. Because, he wrote (1988 p. 18), there exists no social theory of literature he decided to turn to the theory of religious articulations. Because religion in this perspective is a competence of interpretation, not a faith in doctrines he is able to identify in different sources similar intellectual endeavors.

Legitimizing Christian communities

In a similar approach J. Andrew Overman has studied the Gospel of Matthew and shed light on the community behind it. By comparing three conflict stories of Matthew (12,1-8; 15,1-20; 22,34-40) with their parallels in Mark he discovered that in Matthew's view Jesus and his disciples did not break the law, this in contrast to Mark. The Markan community revealed a clear attitude of freedom from the law (p. 78-86). The statement of Mark: "The Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mk 2,27) Matthew omitted. Unlike Mark the law remained valid in his community. Jesus has come not to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them (Mt 5,17) (J.A. Overman p. 90). But the fulfilment depended on a true understanding of them. It is entirely possible to be zealous concerning the keeping of the law and still to be lawless (23,38). Only by applying the dominant principles of love and compassion to the law is it fulfilled (Mt 7,12; 12,50; 21,31). What is most characteristic about the conflict stories is that they portray Jesus as an accurate and true interpreter of the law and depict him as a new Moses (J. Andrew Overman p. 79).

Overman drew two conclusions from this textual evidence. First he stated that a historicizing view of Jesus and the disciples in the Gospels must be rejected (p. 125). "Disciples" is a designation not for a past generation but for the present followers of Jesus within the Matthean community (p. 125). The text of the Gospel has for long been in a "revisable form". It

reveals traces of influences by the setting and horizon of those who transmitted it. The reference to the idea of E.D. Hirsch⁸ that texts are shaped by an interaction between an author and his imagined reader (p. 125), fits perfectly the case of the Gospels. Until Matthew composed his gospel the textual tradition has remained open for new meanings, infused into stories about past events.

G. Theissen has made similar observations. The great eschatological discourse found in Mark 13 refers to the crisis under Caligula 39-41 A.D. and is affected by the experiences made by the Christian community at Jerusalem at that time. By disclosing other references to historical events (especially in the Jewish War 68-70 A.D.) and to geographical places Theissen makes shifts and stages of the textual tradition visible. Particularly important is his discovery that the Gospels included also popular texts not the property of the disciples or the Christian communities. But the path to the Gospel literature was drawn especially by the community traditions. "The Gospels were written in order to adapt traditions from the disciples as popular tales, all of them derived from a different social milieu, to the needs of local communities" (1991 p. 292). Theissen explained this phenomenon in terms of an oral tradition. While Mack tried to solve the puzzle by introducing a discursive notion of religion ("locating" people in the world) Theissen prefers a solution that assumed a longer duration of oral tradition. Both solutions support each other, but should be the subject of further scrutiny. Both authors recognize that the Gospel tradition resembles a revisable text infused with new meanings by those who handed it down. An analogy may illuminate this fact. Sometimes in processions people represent mythological heroes of a past time and infuse them with their own lives. Like these *living images*, narrating the Gospels represented current experiences.

A second conclusion drawn by J. Andrew Overman appears to me more doubtful. He explains the reconfirmation of the Jewish law in Matthew by the internal composition of the Matthean community. It was a community without gentiles (p. 157v). Overman posited its location in a Galilean city, either Tiberias or Sepphoris, at the close of the first century (p. 159v). I would like to doubt that the composition is a sufficient explanation for the fact that Matthew declared the Jewish law valid while Mark, who wrote earlier, had declared it invalid as the apostle Paul had done. In the Gospel of Matthew we find a valuable hint suggesting a different solution. Jesus has come not to abolish (*katalusai*) the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them (5,17). These words allude to a key term in Greek and Roman political theory. The constitution of a people, whether that of Romulus or of Moses, was instituted for the entire history. To change it was impious and unjust. Citizens should be bound by the laws

of their constitution (D.L. Balch, *The Greek Political Topos *peri nómōn** and Matthew 5:17,19, and 16:19. In: D.L. Balch ed. 1991 p. 68-84). Some decennia after Matthew we hear of objections against Christians. They were accused of abolishing the ancestral laws and of revolt (*stasis*). This objection can be grasped in Celsus in the middle of the second century A.D. (e.g. Origenes, *Contra Celsum* II,1; II,4; VIII 2) and traced back to a Jewish source he used. Stressing the fidelity of Jesus Christ to the Jewish law appears to be a response of Matthew to similar accusations.

A look at the author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts supports this solution. Philip Francis Esler has studied the social and political motivations of Lucan theology. Though Luke wrote for a community composed by Gentiles and Jews, he put into Jesus' mouth the assertion that the entire Jewish law remained in force for the new community. The new belief does not involve the abrogation of the law (Lk 16,17). In contrast to the Paul of the letters who renounced the entire law, the Lucan Paul asserts that he has done nothing against "the people or the customs of our ancestors" (Acts 28,17) and that he "has revered the ancestral God by believing all that is written in the law and the prophets" (24,14). The reason for this emphasis in Luke cannot be derived from the composition of the community. The Lucan community was in contrast to that of Matthew composed of Jews and Gentiles. The reason was political. Luke presented Christianity as an ancestral religion because the Roman authorities only officially recognized cults that were "ancestral". The stress on Christianity as an ancestral faith formed part of Luke's strategy for legitimating Christianity vis-à-vis Judaism. But it also has a vital political purpose—to attest that Christianity, unlike the suspected foreign cults, was no threat to Rome, nor to the order and stability so prized by the Romans" (Esler 1987 p. 218). This interpretation indeed explains a fundamental difficulty: while earlier Christian authors (Paul and Mark) abrogated the Jewish law, the later ones (Luke and Matthew) reconfirmed its validity for Christian communities, though they did not demand keeping the levitical food laws. This reconfirmation of Jewish law occurred also in the second century A.D. Ignatius reports in a letter to the Christian community of Philadelphia that he had heard Christians saying: "If I do not find it in the archives, I do not believe it" (8,2). The archives were, as William R. Schoedel has argued, the writings of the Old Testament (W.R. Schoedel 1990 p. 329).

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¹ *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (1922). Tübingen 1988 p. 217f.

² English translation: James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*. Third, Completely Revised Edition. Leiden 1988.

³ A short survey of the history of the problem of Q, that started long before the Gospel of Thomas was found, by J.S. Kloppenborg/L.E. Vaage p. 1-14. B.L. Mack too gives an account of this history (1993 Part I). The article by J. Robinson can be found in a revised and expanded version in a book he wrote together with Helmut Koester: *Trajectories through Early Christianity*. Philadelphia 1971 S. 71-113.

⁴ Q and the Gospel of Mark: Revising Christian Origins. In: John S. Kloppenborg/Leif E. Vaage 1992 p. 15-38 on p. 24.

⁵ For example in: *Drudgery Divine. On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*. University of Chicago Press 1990 p. 121.

⁶ B.L. Mack, Q and the Gospel of Mark: Revising Christian Origins. In: J.S. Kloppenborg/L.E. Vaage o.c. p. 15-33 on p. 23.

⁷ An analysis by V.K. Robbins, The Chreia. In: D.E. Aune (ed.), *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament. Selected Forms and Genres*. Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament 21. Atlanta 1988 p. 1-23.

⁸ E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*. New Haven 1967.

BOOK REVIEWS

IVAN STRENSKI, *Religion in Relation: Method, Application and Moral Location*.
(Studies in Comparative Religion, edited by Frederick M. Denny)
Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press 1993 (X, 257 p.)
ISBN 0-87249-866-2 (cloth) \$35.95

Nine of the eleven essays in this volume have been previously published. In bringing them together here, however, Strenski hopes to be able to clarify aspects about the nature of the academic study of religion that the essays taken individually cannot address. A proper approach to the methodological question in this field of inquiry according to Strenski must involve not only a critique of the “disingenuously concealed” theological concerns in much religious studies scholarship (3), but must also be sensitive to the kinds of relations the study of religion can have to other disciplines concerned with the social and historical aspects of religion. Strenski also insists that ‘methodologists’ must recognize that criticism and theoretical discussion seen as ends in themselves are not likely to make any great contribution to the field. Concrete studies must always be undertaken in an effort to bring new ways of taking up old questions into play as well as framing new questions for the field. Methodological debates must, he therefore insists, interact with concrete applications to actual traditions, and this Strenski does in the essays in part two of this volume. The essays in the final section of the book Strenski hopes, will bring home to those currently involved in the methodological debates that theories of religion are not simply *loci* for arguments but are also themselves social and historical facts that require critical attention (9). This is a point he thinks current methodologists have yet to see.

The essays in section one are primarily critical in tone and focus attention on those approaches to the study of religion that do not take seriously the fact that religion and myth are cultural, social, and historical phenomena. In “Mircea Eliade: Some Theoretical Problems,” Strenski deconstructs the view of history of religions as a kind of super-science that can get at the meaning of religions which empirical, historical, and social-scientific studies miss. In this case, the approach to religious studies, he argues, relies on a special source of knowledge unavailable to the historian or social scientist which suggests that it is beyond all criticism from these quarters. Strenski sees such an approach as essentially theological and wholly dependent upon faith. “It is unduly pessimistic of [Eliade],” he

writes, "to underrate our knowledge and ingenuity that the only method which he believes capable of explaining myths is one which cannot be a matter of knowledge at all, but rather one of faith" (39).

In "Reductionism and Structural Anthropology" and "Falsifying Deep Structures" Strenski directs his attention to a similar problem in the anthropological analysis of myth and religion in the work of C. Lévi-Strauss. As in the case of Eliade, Lévi-Strauss, according to Strenski, forfeits scientific status for his theories because they rest on knowledge of deep structures of the human mind that defies all possibility of falsification. Strenski argues, therefore, that if structural anthropology is to be of any benefit whatever to the scientific student of religion it must establish links between the ordinary experience of individuals and the deep structural claims.

In the final essay, "Hubert, Mauss and the Comparative Social History of Religions" Strenski argues that with Durkheim and the Durkheimians the study of religion had genuinely become fully public in that he (they) insisted that religious phenomena had to be accounted for comparatively and sociologically. The work of this group of scholars, he claims, emerged over against the ahistorical work of the 'historians of religion' of the *Ecole Pratiques des Hautes Etudes*, Fifth Section who emphasized the interiority of religious experience in their analyses. Such an emphasis on experience, that is, permitted the withdrawal of religion from the social sphere and therefore made a genuinely scientific study of religion impossible from the beginning.

The essays in part two of this volume are 'case studies' in Buddhism which, in some sense, 'embody' the kind of study of religion that ought to be taken up in light of the various critiques mounted in section one—or so it appears. The bond between the two sets of essays, however, does not always appear to be as strong as one might have expected. In "Gradual Enlightenment, Sudden Enlightenment and Empiricism" Strenski attempts to lay bare "how epistemological perspectives might illuminate the shape of Buddhist attitudes toward the gradual or sudden attainment of Enlightenment" (89). And in "On Generalized Exchange and the Domestication of the *Sangha*" he sets out to correct elements of Weber's sociological interpretation of Buddhist culture (132). In this case Strenski thinks Lévi-Strauss's work can be helpful in explaining domestication on the basis of the dynamic of gift exchange. Finally, in "Lévi-Strauss and the Buddhists" Strenski sets the record straight about the nature of the Buddhist parallels in the work of Lévi-Strauss and attempts to understand their significance.

The final four essays concern what Strenski refers to as "the moral loca-

tion of theories.” In “Heidegger is No Hero” his concern is with the moral consequences of choosing to do religious studies from the perspective of Heideggerian existentialism. This is a task which, he laments, no Heideggerian student of religions has seriously considered. In the second essay, a critical review of Eliade’s *Autobiography*, Strenski ‘wonders’ about the import of Eliade’s political ties to the Iron Guard for his ‘religious studies research’; and especially so since it appears that Eliade has deliberately withheld information about his early political involvements in Romania. In his essay on Rene Girard Strenski explores how Girard’s views on sacrifice seem essentially to be a repetition of past grievances of the French Protestants against the Roman Catholics; he does not, however, focus on the benefit/detriment such an approach to understanding sacrifice holds for Religious Studies. And in “Henri Hubert, Racial Science and Political Myth” Strenski provides a more positive view, as it seems, of the interpenetration of the study of religion with a political agenda. Hubert, (along with Mauss), he insists, counteracts “the usual enlightenment iconoclastic reputations often clinging to the Durkheimians” (200). Hubert, Strenski argues, was concerned not only with fulfilling the standards of scholarship (189) but also with providing an edifying story (199).

Because of the diversity of the essays, in intention, content and style, included in this collection it is difficult to see the unity Strenski thinks them to have. Indeed, at times it appears, despite his comments in the introduction to the essays (“Making Relation Manifest”), as if the essays work at cross purposes. The critique of the historians of religions at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes by the Durkheimians, for example, seems to be equally applicable to the “creative hermeneutics” practised by Hubert. They, as Strenski admits (86), committed themselves to a scientific agenda but, like Hubert, allowed themselves to do “more than was necessary to fulfil the standards of scholarship” (189). Furthermore, Strenski’s implicit commitment to a strictly scientific agenda in the critiques presented in section one of this volume seem to require of him the enlightenment iconoclasm which he is happy to see jettisoned in section three. And finally, Strenski really does not take seriously the need to provide arguments for the values he is willing to espouse or against those values he rejects; he simply takes it for granted, it appears, that others will be committed to the same liberal values he holds. To argue for or against values, moreover, is not the task of the student of religion; in any event, Strenski provides no argument here to that effect. Despite these difficulties, however, the essays Strenski presents here make an important contribution to the methodological clarification of the field of religious

studies. They reveal a first rate mind at work on some of the most difficult problems that characterise the field of religious studies today.

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H. S. VERSNEL, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion*. Vol. I: *Ter Unus: Isis, Dionysos, Hermes. Three Studies in Henotheism*. (Studies in Greek and Roman Religion 6,1) Leiden: Brill 1990 (XIV, 267 p.) ISBN 90-04-09268-4 \$68.57
Vol. II: *Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual* (Studies in Greek and Roman Religion 6,2) Leiden: Brill 1993 (XV, 354 p.) ISBN 90-04-09268-4 \$103.00

This bundle of collected studies (most of them revised versions of earlier published papers in Dutch and/or English) is tied together under a—at first sight—provocative thesis, but reading the introduction of the first volume one gains the insight, that Versnel presents an essential problem of Religionswissenschaft: There is no need to dissolve every cognitive dissonance. That does not mean: religion consists of inconsistencies. But they can fulfil a function without disturbing the whole system. E.g. the delay of *parousia* in Early Christianity could better be understood as getting part of the system of beliefs than as its essential crisis. Festinger's ideas (*When prophecy fails*) are developed further. Every theologian (and of course every historian of religion) should read this introduction and will return to his work with new perspectives (and will be eager to read the other studies at least of the first volume).

Versnel exemplifies this thesis with classical issues. He shows that contradictions are in many cases intended. The studies of the first volume deal with the exclusiveness of the cultic approach to only one god within the polytheistic system. Versnel analyses henotheistic formulas in hymns: (1) the contradiction in the hymn to Isis (from Kyme), that praises Isis both as tyrant and as liberator from tyranny. In sharp historic profile Versnel shows that this predication of Isis reflects the ideology of Hellenistic rulers (39-95). (2) In Euripides' *Bakchai* the ambiguity (of polis denying god and of god denying polis) must not be resolved. Both sides are *asebeis* and *sophoi* (96-205). (3) Martial's formula *ter unus* (in 5, 24) is a pun, not a cultic predication preforming Christian trinity (206-251).

In the second volume studies concern another line of interpretation of ambiguities: To neutralize them would misjudge their function in rites of transition and rituals of reversal. Versnel recognizes the temptation to see in every myth and ritual a reversal or an initiation, he does not fully avoid it. A survey on *Myth and ritual, old and new* (16-89) pleads for a change of paradigms.—Two studies deal with the carnevalesque feasts in Greece and Rome *Kronos and the Kronia* (90-135).—*Saturnus and the Saturnalia* (136-227). Rites of reversal of the role of women are the subject of: *The Roman festival for Bona Dea and the Greek Thesmophoria* (228-288).—*Apollo and Mars one hundred years after Roscher* (289-334) deals with military service of male youth before being received among adult men.—Both volumes contain a *Bibliography* (8 resp. 10 pp.); *Indexes: Names and Subjects; Greek Words, Latin Words*.

This is not a handbook. As a treasury of bibliographical *pretiosa* one likes to have it in reach. But its true value is that it shows: science is discussion. Openminded, Henk Versnel is acquainted with all the models of thinking in the Paris school, with sober English positivism, with American anthropology, German renewed *Religionswissenschaft*, Italian *storia delle religioni* ... Like a good old Dutch merchant he chooses the best of all over the world and rejects what is inedible. All is digested and offered with a spice of humour. Advanced students of classical religion (with regard to undergraduates with little or no Greek/Latin citations are translated) have to read it—(1) as an antidote against the security of handbooks; (2) as a way out of the impasse of *Antike und* (say: against) *Christentum*; (3) as a most informed guide to the current interpretation of Greek/Roman myths and rituals.

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PETER BRUNS, *Das Christusbild Aphrahats des Persischen Weisen* (Hereditas. Studien zur Alten Kirchengeschichte, Band 4) Bonn: Verlag Borengässer 1990 (XXIV + 243 p.) ISBN-3-923946-15-5 DM 48.—

Aphraates the Persian Sage has attracted much scholarly attention over the last decades. Robert Murray has extensively dealt with his 23 *Demonstrationes* in his *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (Cambridge 1975) and G. G. Blum has written the thorough lemma *Afrahat* in the *TRE*,

Vol. I, 1977, p. 625-635. M.-J. Pierre has published a French translation of the *Demonstrationes* in the *Sources chrétiennes* (SC 349, 359, Paris 1988-1989) with a long introduction and bibliography. T. Baarda has published on Aphraates' Gospel text and G. Nedungatt on his specific forms of asceticism ("The Covenanters of the Early Syriac-Speaking Church," *OCP* 39, 1973, 191-215; 419-444, a basic article which amazingly is missing in Peter Bruns' bibliography and also not quoted). Peter Bruns' monography on Aphraates' christology originally was a 1988 Bochum dissertation and apparently was reprinted in 1990 without additions and corrections. He has also recently brought out a German translation of Aphraates' *Demonstrationes* with Herder Verlag Freiburg.

Peter Bruns' study is based on thorough research of Aphraates' 23 *Demonstrationes* written between 337 and 345 somewhere in the northern region of the Sassanian empire. He places them in their appropriate historical and cultural context and constantly refers to other Christian writings that originate in the same area and cultural milieu. His main aim is not a chapter in a *Dogmengeschichte*, but rather a study of Aphraates' conception of Christ ("Christusbild"), its traditions, sources, and ways of representation. Bruns presents therefore a sketch of the history of Christianity in Northern Mesopotamia (Ch. 1), a survey of other early Syriac conceptions of Christ as found in Tatian and Bardaisan, in the Odes of Solomon and the Acts of Thomas, and in the Syriac Didascalia (Ch. 2), as well as an analysis of Aphraates' 23 *Demonstrationes*, their form and style (Ch. 3). He then turns to the literary forms of Aphraates' christology and in particular to his typology (Ch. 4), christological themes like Christ's divinity and his nature (Ch. 5) and the various images of Christ such as Saviour and Physician, Athlete and Bridegroom (Ch. 6). In the final chapter Peter Bruns treats Aphraates' pneumatology, his concept of incarnation and Christ's descent into the underworld (Ch. 7). In the conclusion he emphasizes that Aphraates' christology has no relations whatsoever with the Nicene Creed, but that its main forms of expression are symbols and images ("Bildersprache") like in Ephrem Syrus' writings and in the mainstream of early Syriac Christianity (see P. Tanios Bou Mansour, *La pensée symbolique de saint Ephrem le syrien*, Kaslik 1988). At the end of this well-written book there are useful indices.

Peter Bruns' study of Aphraates' concepts and images of Christ is an excellent contribution to the study of this special and often neglected branch of early Christianity. It deserves a broader scholarly attention than only from the few specialists in Syriac and the history of Syriac-speaking Christianity, because of its focus on general topics like the relation between religion and language and specific religious rhetoric in a wider

cultural context (see now Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire. The Development of Christian Discourse*, Los Angeles — Oxford 1991). One of its other merits is that it does not treat Aphraates in isolation; but constantly links his ideas with Tatian, the Odes of Solomon, the Acts of Thomas and other writings, which use the same kind of symbolic language (see my "Thomasakten", in W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen II*, 1989, 289-367).

Given the lack of sources for the study of early Syriac Christianity several views and statements made by Peter Bruns are debatable. His interpretation of Ode of Solomon 36 on p. 42 as referring to Christ is incorrect. The whole passage refers rather to the re-born believer, who in a sense is identical with Christ. On p. 57 Peter Bruns deals with the so-called Hymn of the Pearl in the Acts of Thomas and refers to Bornkamm's interpretation of it. He misses, however, H. Kruse's basic article "The Return of the Prodigal", *Orientalia*, 47, 1978, 163-214, which gives the correct interpretation (see "Thomasakten", 296-298). Aphraates' links with contemporary Judaism have been much discussed and Peter Bruns also sees the origin of Aphraates' confession in the jewry of Adiabene, where he found his inspiration. It seems highly doubtful whether there ever were Jewish Christians in Adiabene or in Edessa (see my "Syrian Christianity and Judaism", in: J. Lieu-J. North-T. Rajak, *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, London 1992, 124-146). The continuous struggle with the Marcionites is rather the reason that the Christians took over Jewish material and ideas, but completely reinterpreted their Jewish legacy in a christological sense. The same holds true for the parallelism between Adam and Christ mentioned on p. 105ff., where the anti-Marcionite tenor is obvious (see my "Adam and the True Prophet in the Pseudo-Clementines," *Festschrift Carsten Colpe*, 1990, 314-323). These minor points, however, highlight the importance of this book and the need of an all encompassing study of Early Syriac-speaking Christianity, to which this work is an important contribution.

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The Journal of Oriental Research Madras, Vols. LVI-LXII: Drs. S. S. Janaki
Felicitation Volume. Madras 1992 (xxxvii + 440 p.) Rs. 175 (\$30)

One of the last surviving outposts of creative Sanskrit culture in Madras, the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute continues to generate research in all the major fields of Sanskrit erudition and literature, in addition to providing a congenial asylum for both foreign Sanskritists and south Indian scholars. In part, the Institute's continued vitality in the not always sympathetic cultural climate of Madras is due to the élan imparted by its sometime director, S.S. Janaki, who is well known to Sanskritists for her outstanding work on Ruyyaka, on Sanskrit *bhāṣas*, Śaivāgama, and the Hoysala chronicle *Gadyakarnāmrta* (a rare example of medieval Sanskrit historiography), among other interests (including the current staging and live production of Sanskrit dramas). This enlarged volume of the JORM, published by the Institute, honors Dr. Janaki on her *śaṣṭya-bdāpūrti*. A welcome list of her publications, many of them in somewhat recondite journals, precedes the papers.

The forty essays (several in Sanskrit) bear eloquent witness to the range and liveliness of discourse at the Institute. Of particular interest to readers of this journal are André Padoux's study of the nature of mantric utterance; Robert Lester's remarks on renunciation in Śrīvaiṣṇavism; Dennis Hudson's essay on the Tamil Hindu response to 19th-century Protestant proselytism (in Jaffna and Tirunelveli); David Smith's discussion of the dance of Śiva in Umāpati's *Kuñcitāṅghristava*; Francis Clooney's penetrating remarks on hearing and seeing in early Vedānta; Wilhelm Halbfass's exploration of Mīmāṃsā and Bhartṛhari; Hélène Brunner's authoritative exposition of the four traditional sections of the Śaivāgamas; Phyllis Granoff's paper on tolerance in the Tantras; Richard Gombrich's explanation of the series of six former Buddhas mentioned in the Pali Canon; Indira Peterson's remarks on asceticism and the warrior ethos in Bhāravi; and Richard Davis's intellectual biography of the great 12th-century scholar, Aghoraśivācārya. This truncated list naturally fails to do justice to the richness of this volume, a worthy offering to the fine scholar honored here and to the learned and spirited tradition of V. Raghavan that she represents.

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ROBERT E. BUSWELL, JR., and ROBERT M. GIMELLO (Eds.), *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1992 (Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 7) (IX + 525 p.) ISBN 0-8248-1417-7 (cloth) £ 35.00

This is a substantial book, both in size and in the quality of its scholarship. It includes a general introduction by the editors on the varieties and import of *mārga* in Buddhist traditions, and thirteen articles: Four on Pali and Sanskrit texts (by G.G. Burford, C. Cox, R.E. Buswell and P.S. Jaini), four focusing on Tibetan texts (by D.S. Lopez, M. Kapstein, J. Hopkins and A.C. Klein), three on Chinese Buddhism (by Yoshizu Y., J.R. McRae and R.M. Gimello) and two articles (by P. Groner and C. Bielefeldt) on Buddhism in Japan.

Paths to Liberation is a good example of a welcome trend—the incorporation of Buddhist studies into the field of history and phenomenology of religions. The topical character of the book indicates this. The high degree of its integration of Buddhist studies into religious phenomenology is also apparent in that the book's topic (*mārga*, 'path') is one derived from Buddhism, rather than one based upon western religions, e.g., 'soteriology.' While most of the studies here are only implicitly comparative, the Introduction and several of the individual studies have explicitly phenomenological concerns. For example, the articles by Hopkins and Klein both explore the phenomenon of religious experience in Buddhist contexts.

As for the quality of the articles, all are in-depth textual studies which seem competent, but only a specialist in each of these varieties of Buddhism could fully evaluate them. For my part, I found several of the articles on Indian and Tibetan texts too specialized to be of interest, but I learned a good deal from those on Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. It is unfortunate, however, as acknowledged by the editors themselves, that the book omits treatment of *mārga* in the Pure land tradition (*mārga* by proxy?).

This publication represents a significant contribution to contemporary Buddhist studies. Most buddhologists will find its studies useful for differentiating some important varieties of Buddhism and for understanding their own areas of specialization more fully. Adventuresome comparativists as well may find some of the articles accessible and illuminating.

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THE ANTI-INDIVIDUALISTIC IDEOLOGY OF HELLENISTIC CULTURE¹

LUTHER H. MARTIN

[N]o individual is capable of creating a fully originally gesture, belonging to nobody else...nor can it even be regarded as that persons's instrument; on the contrary, it is gestures that use us as their instruments, as their bearers and incarnations.

Milan Kundera²

Summary

Historical generalizations are invariably shaped by modern cultural values. One of the dominant values of modern Western culture is individualism, the origins of which tend to be claimed by historians for their own domains of research, with examples extending from sixth-century B.C. Greece through modern Europe. The generalization about a Hellenistic period of history, first made in the nineteenth-century, clearly reflects this value of individualism which became, consequently, part of the scholarly convention about the culture of this period. With reference to the thought, religious practice, and material culture of the period, this article argues to the contrary that neither Hellenistic idea nor ideal can be held to value in any way an individualistic view of the self.

Alexander the Great and the Athenian general Alcibiades were typical examples of individualism taken to task by philosophers. Hellenistic ethics seem, rather, to have been dominated by a social principle of "Socratic care". Similarly, Hellenistic religions, including the early Christian associations, defined their *raison d'être* on the basis of distinctive social claims. One Christian tradition even explicitly employed the Hellenistic ethical principle of "Socratic care" as its distinctive criterion. Finally, the well-known Hellenistic terracotta figurines, often adduced as examples of Hellenistic individualism, were, in fact, mass-produced and were employed in ritual, i.e., collective, contexts.

Whereas the socio-political transformations that characterize Hellenistic culture did challenge traditional collective bases for identity, the intellectual, religious and artistic expressions of this culture all confirm an anti-individualistic character for the alternative social strategies of identity produced during this period.

At one point in the 1973 Monty Python film, "The Life of Brian", the hapless hero of the title, having been mistaken for the Messiah, attempts to persuade his resolute disciples that they need not depend on him, or on anyone else: "You don't need to follow me. You don't need to follow anybody", Brian implores. "You've

got to think for yourselves. You're all individuals.'" As in some Durkheimian nightmare, the crowd concurs with one voice: "Yes, we're all individuals."³

This ironic exchange poses the perennial question of the relationship between self and society. Is the self to be understood, ideally, as an autonomous subject, or is the identity of the self in reality a social construct contingent upon its membership in some corporate body? I should like to argue that Monty Python's parodic portrayal of an individualistic assertion rejected by the affirming discourse of a collective subject accurately captures a central feature, at least, of Hellenistic culture. I should like to argue this thesis by taking note of the criteria employed in the periodization of a Hellenistic era in the first place, and then turn to a consideration of the individual in this period: in its thought, its religion, and its material culture.

Individualism and Hellenistic Periodization

In historiography, as in popular culture, the representation of others, of those removed from ourselves in time as by geography, invariably involves an interpretative imposition of one's own cultural values upon ideologically muted subjects. That individualism is a dominant value of modern Western culture, cannot be gainsaid. Its origins, consequently, tend to be claimed by historians and anthropologists for their own domains of research. The individual was discovered, we have been assured:

by the lyric poets [of sixth century B.C. Greek]...; or by Plato, with his portrait of Socrates;⁴ or in the Hellenistic age; or by the Roman poets; or by the Antonines; or by Augustine. Perhaps he had been there all the time, lurking in Homer's Achilles and Odysseus. Still, he had evidently fled away again by the early Middle Ages, only to be rediscovered first in [the eleventh or the twelfth century]...; then, according to Burckhardt's famous analysis, in Renaissance Italy; then again in the sixteenth, or seventeenth, or eighteenth centuries.⁵

Additionally, the origins of individualism have been identified with the emergence of chieftainships out of the kinship collectivities of traditional societies,⁶ argued for one of the most corporate of peoples, the Israelites of the Deuteronomic period,⁷ and claimed, of course, for early Christianity, that first-century array of cultic fragility which has had to bear the weight of so much that Western

culture came to value.⁸ The “individual”, as one recent commentator has concluded is a very “slippery figure”.⁹

One reason the individual has remained so lubricious is that historical scholarship too often confounds a social acknowledgement of individuals—even a concern with their well-being—with the social valuing of individuals above the collective of which they are members. Consequently, we may note Louis Dumont’s useful differentiation between the “empirical” individual, as he terms those samples of mankind found in all societies as the “subject of speech, thought, and will”,¹⁰ and an “ideological” individualism, a valuing of “the independent, autonomous, and thus essentially nonsocial moral being, who carries...[the] permanent values” of culture.¹¹ It is, in other words, not the particularity of unitary existence but its approbation that provides the condition for taking special notice of the individual in the first place.

The English speaking world seemed unconcerned with ideological “individualism” until after 1840 when Henry Reeve first coined the term in his translation of Alexis de Tocqueville’s famous observations on *Democracy in America*.¹² In this work, first published in 1835, the intrepid French investigator of nineteenth-century American culture observed that “individualism is a novel expression, to which a novel idea [democracy] has given birth.”¹³ Reeve felt constrained to append an apologetic note to his introduction of this English neologism: “However strange it may seem to the English ear”, he wrote, “I know of no English word exactly equivalent to” the French word *individualisme*—itself a term of nineteenth-century coinage.¹⁴

At about the same time that the Tocqueville was extolling the value of individualism for the American experiment, the German historian, J.G. Droysen, was “inventing” the Hellenistic age. Unacknowledged from antiquity through the Enlightenment, Droysen’s new periodization, itself a species of historical generalization, reflected the historicistic values of its nineteenth-century definition.¹⁵ The criteria for historiography during this century had been influenced by the emergence of nationalism and the subsequent founding of national archives, which supplied the recently established profession of history with a trove of newly consolidated, if politically oriented, sources. Human history became

structured, consequently, primarily in terms of political change, organized around the foundational acts of its governing and military figures. This so-called "Great Man" view of history—what undergraduates sometimes refer to as "kings and things"—was systematically formulated by Thomas Carlyle in his treatment of "the heroic in history", published in 1840, the same year as the English translation of de Tocqueville.¹⁶ It is understandable, then, that Droysen defined his new Hellenistic period as extending from the military conquests of one "great" individual, Alexander of Macedonia, to that of another, Octavian, who incorporated the remainder of Alexander's former empire into that of Rome with his victory over Egypt in 31 B.C., and who subsequently received from the Roman Senate the title of "Augustus".¹⁷

The first of Droysen's three-volume *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, published in 1836, begins with the now famous words: "*Der Name Alexander bezeichnet das Ende einer Weltepoche, den Anfang einer neuen*".¹⁸ Most of the known world, and some beyond, had succumbed to Alexander's military advances by the time of his death at the age of thirty-three. This young king had more or less successfully transformed the socio-political world from its *polis* ideal, in which each city-state was expected to be autonomous and self-sufficient, to a competitive but interdependent network of ecumenical empire.¹⁹

Alexander's conquests and the consequent political internationalism they established generated the conditions, it is generally held, for the emergence of individualism, a remarkably timed occurrence given the "invention" of this allegedly seminal cultural period only in the nineteenth century. In the words of W.W. Tarn: "Man as a political animal, a fraction of the *polis* or self-governing city state, had ended with [Alexander's teacher,] Aristotle; with Alexander begins man as an individual"²⁰—a perceived shift from the self-sufficiency of the *polis* to that of the individual, in the view of political theorist, George Sabine.²¹ More recently, J. Gwyn Griffiths has elaborated this truism of Hellenistic existence with reference to the sense of personal insignificance supposedly engendered by the conquests of Alexander, which "threw the citizens back on their own spiritual resources so that their concerns as individuals counted correspondingly by more".²² Most recently, Peter Green has concluded similarly that "cities and empires had

become too vast and heterogeneous to give adequate psychological support to inheritors of the old, local *polis* tradition: their society was no longer either integrated or manageable''. Like Griffiths, Green concludes with the now formulaic axiom that ''the individual was thrown back on himself''.²³

Roughly concurrent with Alexander's conquests, by which Droysen defined the Hellenistic world, a cosmological revolution was constructing a greatly expanded architecture of the physical world. This new cosmological image was to be given systematic formulation in the second century A.D. by Claudius Ptolemy, after whom it was subsequently named. In contrast to the traditional ''three-storied'' image of antiquity, in which an overarching heaven gave sanction to localized socio-political organization, the Ptolemaic cosmology differentiated a system of seven planetary spheres, all of which embraced the terrestrial globe, a cosmological representation of universalism correlate to the international realignment of Hellenistic power. Just as the borders and battlements of empire guarded against the ambitions of barbarians from without, so the hierarchical planetary enclaves of the cosmos, themselves bounded by the finite sphere of the fixed stars, protected against the incursion of cosmic chaos from beyond. This newly expanded cosmos, guided by immense forces of which the individual had little understanding and less control, reinforced the effects of Hellenistic internationalism, it is argued, in its production of individualism.²⁴

Although the cultural transformations that marked a Hellenistic age may have occasioned a heightened awareness of the empirical individual, any valuing of such an existence, I should like to argue, was imputed by the modern values of a nascent historical discipline which periodized a Hellenistic era in the first place. Neither Hellenistic idea nor ideology can be held in any way to value such an existence; ''individuality itself had no importance'', is the stark conclusion of one historian about Hellenistic thought,²⁵ to which we now turn.

The Individual in Hellenistic Thought

De Tocqueville distinguished his modern, democratic notion of individualism from egotism,²⁶ an expression that Reeve had no

problem rendering into English, for egotism, according to the Frenchman, is “a vice as old as the world”.²⁷ Whether as old as the world, it is at least as old as the Hellenistic world, and its chief exemplar, according to the second century A.D. Roman historian, Arrian, was Alexander. Attempting to correct the excesses of his predecessors,²⁸ Arrian wrote of Alexander, who had been romanticized in antiquity as in modernity,²⁹ that the renowned leader:

had no lack of grandeur or ambition: he would never have remained idle in the enjoyment of any of his conquests, even had he extended his empire from Asia to Europe and from Europe to the British Isles. On the contrary, he would have continued to seek beyond them for unknown lands, as it was ever his nature, if he had no rival, to strive to better his own best (*Anab.* 7.1.4).

A student of the Stoic philosopher, Epictetus, Arrian concluded of such unbridled ambition that “none of these things...can make a man happy, unless he can win one more victory in addition to those the world thinks so great—the victory over himself” (*Anab.* 4.7.5).³⁰

Alexander seemed to be a *topos* in Hellenistic literature not only for egotism but for the absence of self-knowledge.³¹ Reportedly, this “most ambitious of men” (*anthrōpōn philotimotatos*) (Dio Chrys., *Or.* 4.4) once inquired of Diogenes what military achievements were necessary in order for him to become the best of kings, a question about how best to govern others born out of the practical concerns of empire, that is, simultaneously, a question about how best to govern oneself. In the reply recorded by Dio Chrysostom, a variant of some twenty-two references to an exchange between the two,³² the Cynic philosopher replies that “you are your own worst enemy....For no foolish and wicked man understands himself, else Apollo would not have enjoined this first of all for each of us to know oneself” (*gnōnai heauton*) (*Or.* 4.56-7).

Alcibiades, another character familiar from ancient literature for his military and political exploits, is reported to have received the same advice from Socrates. The supposed dialogue, known as the *Alcibiades I* and attributed to Plato, is a virtual treatise upon the Greek injunction to “know yourself”.³³ Like the young Alexander who reportedly had confronted his ambitions when he succeeded to the Macedonian throne at the age of twenty, Alcibiades appears in this dialogue at the outset of his own public and political life when he was not yet twenty (123D). He is dissatisfied with his privileges

of birth and heritage and, like Alexander, desires to gain power throughout the world (105C). But Socrates demonstrates to Alcibiades that his political agenda is based upon the conventional knowledge shared by those in the Athenian society he hopes to lead (103-114). But whereas Alcibiades may not be particularly disadvantaged with respect to his political peers, his real competitors are the kings of Sparta and Persia whose superiority of education, wealth, and authority Socrates details at length. To realize his ambition, Alcibiades must improve himself not only by knowing more than his countrymen, but by understanding more than his foreign competitors as well. He may achieve this goal, according to Socrates, by heeding the Delphic maxim to “know yourself” (124B). By knowing himself, Alcibiades will come to know the proper affairs of others and thereby the political affairs of state (133D-134A). In response to Alcibiades’ query about how he might achieve this self-knowledge (124D), Socrates responds that he would come to know himself if he “took care of himself” (*epimelesthai sauton*: 127E). For, by taking care of himself, Socrates assures Alcibiades, he shall come to know himself (132D).

The relationship between taking care of oneself and political activity is based upon the traditional Greek proverb, first documented by Herodotus, that those who best take care of their own affairs will best take care of the affairs of the city (Hdt. 5.29; see also Thucyd. 2.40.2; 6.9.2; Pl., *Prot.* 318E).³⁴ Thus, in Plato’s *Apology*, Socrates defends himself as a master of “taking care of the self” (*epimeleia heautou*), for in teaching people to occupy themselves with themselves, he teaches them to occupy themselves with the city (*Apol.* 29E). Based in political concerns, Socratic “care”, and with it knowledge of oneself, was a communal injunction.³⁵

The Stoics and the Neo-Platonists, the two dominant Hellenistic philosophical traditions, agreed upon the foundational nature of the *Alcibiades* dialogue for their own philosophical enterprise, and upon its subject, the relationship between care of oneself and self-knowledge, for philosophical thought.³⁶ The Stoics considered self-knowledge to be not only the beginning of philosophy but the sum of it (e.g., Jul., *Or.* 6.185D).³⁷ Similarly, the neo-Platonic philosopher, Proclus, wrote in his *Commentary* on the *Alcibiades I*, that “knowledge of oneself was the foundation of philosophy and of

Platonic thought''. He reports further that Iamblicus gave the *Alcibiades I* the first place in the ten dialogues in which he considered the entire philosophy of Plato to be contained (Procl. in *Alc.* 11).³⁸

The Platonic argument for the existence of a *psyche* within each of us is not in reference to *my* soul, but to *the* soul, as Jean-Pierre Vernant has emphasized. His notion of "the individual soul...does not convey a man's individual psychology but rather the aspiration of an individual subject'', Dumont's empirical individual, "to become one with the all, reintegrated into the general cosmic order'',³⁹ an order that structured and included the social world. As Louis Gernet concludes—if we may excuse the non-inclusive language of an earlier era:

The mental universe [of Hellenic humanism], which corresponds to a "political" society wherein the unifying principle is that of the abstract and interchangeable "citizen'', is in fact that cosmos in which "man" find[s] his place, but in which "men" do not as readily.⁴⁰

During the Hellenistic period, the Socratic notion of communal care became extended from being the concern of a young man to being considered a permanent duty throughout one's life, and from political relationships to encompass all human relationships.⁴¹ The Greeks, like the Romans after them, had no substantive word to indicate this "self" that they were enjoined to know and care for. They expressed this sense, rather, by the use of the reflexive pronoun: *autos* in Greek; *ipse* in Latin,⁴² introducing, thereby, at least two voices into a rhetoric of self. This rhetorical act of self-formation constituted what Michel Foucault has termed a "technology of the self'',⁴³ whereby an intersubjective basis of identity was established.⁴⁴ I would agree on this point with Hannah Arendt, who observed that for the Greeks, "a life spent [outside the world of the common] in the privacy of 'one's own' (*idion*), ...is 'idiotic' by definition'', whereas for the Romans, such activity "offered but a temporary refuge from the business of the *res publica*".⁴⁵

While there was most certainly an alteration in the technologies of self-formation occasioned by the intellectual transformations generated by Hellenistic culture, these technologies did not produce any ideologies of individualism. Even as the Hellenistic world retained from classical philosophy its notable lack of interest in the

individual as in particularity generally,⁴⁶ so it retained traditional values of social identity, however redefined.

Even American culture, with its historical values of self-reliance and rugged individualism, is rife with what Tocqueville had already described as “secondary associations”.⁴⁷ These special interest associations: from conchologists to nudists, often self-consciously organized as extended families, fill the void left by the erosion of traditional social groupings. As one recent observer has noted, such subcultures arise and flourish “most intensely” in places like “the condo kingdoms of coastal Florida, and in the tract-housing sprawls of Southern California”, that is, “in places that lack rootedness and a sense of space.”⁴⁸ It was a similar disintegration of the traditional locative definitions of social existence that characterized the Hellenistic world.

Those who have argued most vigorously for a Hellenistic ideology of individualism have also argued, incongruously, for a heightened, if redefined, social reality.⁴⁹ Patrick Atherton, for example, concludes that all of the Hellenistic philosophies were “concerned with the difficulty that arises for detached individuals who regard themselves as essentially separated from an order to which they nevertheless properly belong.”⁵⁰ And rather than individualism, Tarn notes the “enormous growth of non-political private associations and clubs” that followed the weakening of city ties.⁵¹ Hellenistic cultural fragmentation did not, in other words, give rise to any ideology of individualism, but, as in contemporary Florida and California, to a plurality of alternative subcultures. These Hellenistic subcultures are well exemplified by the religious formations of the era.

The Individual and Hellenistic Religions

Alfred North Whitehead once defined religion as “what the individual does with his own solitariness”.⁵² This modern view of religion, is as pervasive as it is problematic—at least from the perspective of many recent theoretical considerations.⁵³ As with historical generalizations, however, the validity of contemporary theoretical constraints often is inappropriately assumed in assessing other peoples and periods. Nevertheless, Whitehead’s apothegm is often cited as characteristic of Hellenistic religions.

Joining the ranks of such recognized scholars in the field as E.R. Dodds,⁵⁴ and J. Gwyn Griffiths,⁵⁵ Peter Green has most recently asserted that Whitehead's definition "offers an increasingly accurate picture" of religion during the Hellenistic centuries.⁵⁶ In the altered political condition of the Hellenistic city, "the climate of religious sentiment", according to Atherton, was held to be "much influenced by the pronounced individualism characteristic of the period....It provided the necessary setting of order for the release of individuals to pursue a personal satisfaction which could no longer be confined within the culture of the ancestral community."⁵⁷ And Walter Burkert, in his recent monograph on the ancient mystery cults—those religious forms that are generally held to be the most distinctive of the Hellenistic period—has traced the origins of these mysteries to the "discovery of the individual" which he dates, following Bruno Snell, from sixth-century B.C. Greece.⁵⁸

Sophocles, by contrast, at the beginning of *Oedipus at Colonus*, portrayed Oedipus as a lonely wanderer who is *apoptolis* 'without a city' (S. *OC* 208). Later, Aristotle would insist that anyone who, like Oedipus, is *apolis*, that is, who stands alone as an individual apart from collective humanity is "either beast or god (*thērion e theon*)" (*Pol.* 1253a).⁵⁹ As might be anticipated in historical judgement, Aristotle's premise is closer to the view documented from Hellenistic religions than is Whitehead's; and nowhere is this view represented more graphically than by the theriomorphic hero of Apuleius' second-century A.D. novel, *The Golden Ass*, a morality tale that juxtaposes its lusty portrayal of everyday life in the Hellenistic world with the blessedness of a religious existence under the protection of the goddess Isis.

Apuleius' novel opens with its dubious hero, Lucius, a sort of Hellenistic Everyman, journeying to Hypata in Thessaly on business, an increasingly common activity in the context of Hellenistic internationalism. While in Hypata, Lucius is the guest of Milo, a friend of a friend from whom Lucius has a letter of introduction. Despite the protection of Milo's hospitality, Lucius nevertheless becomes inappropriately involved in the strange customs practiced in this place away from his own city, and finds himself, as a consequence, transformed into an ass, a "wretched beast" that

was associated with pretty much the same pejorative attributes in antiquity as in modernity and was considered especially detestable to the goddess Isis (*Met.* 11.6).

The *Metamorphoses*, to give the novel its classical title, is loosely constructed around the aimless wanderings of its asinine hero as he searches for a common rose, the antidote that will transform his bestial individuality into humanity. Unlike the promise of potential which characterizes the modern ideology of individualism, the only promise of individualism characteristic of Hellenistic culture was that of the social exclusion and lonely isolation exemplified by Lucius. As in the philosophical traditions, “marks of individuality” were perceived by Hellenistic religions as “signs of imperfection” to be overcome.⁶⁰ Whitehead’s apothegm about individual solitude, rather than characterizing Hellenistic religions, describes best what these religions saved one from.

The Hellenistic metaphor for what was considered to be the asocial, diminished state of being from which one might be saved was “wandering”. The asinine hero of Apuleius’ novel, as the consequence of his *curiositas* or ‘individualistic assertions’, like Sophocles’ Oedipus, became hopelessly lost in a “maze of miserable wanderings” (*Met.* 11.20).⁶¹ According to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, prospective initiates into the mysteries of Demeter would, upon their arrival at the sacred *temenos* of the goddess’ Eleusinian sanctuary, repeat the ancient words spoken by the goddess herself upon her own arrival at the site: “And so I wandered and am come here” (*Hymn Hom.* 133). And “the first intelligible words” of the recently published fragment of a Mithraic Catechism from Egypt “might be indicative of wandering”,⁶² an image of this terrestrial state of existence,⁶³ while, an inscription preserved in the Walbrook Mithraeum in London promises “life to wandering humans”.⁶⁴

The soteriological rose which finally marks the conclusion to Lucius’ wandering is proffered by a priest of Isis during a procession in honor of the goddess. Lucius’ *redieris ad homines*, ‘return to the human world’ (*Met.* 11.6) is predicated upon his association with the society of Isis, one of the most prominent of the Hellenistic religious subcultures. Lucius’ membership in the society of Isis is not the consequence of his own volition, the individualistic basis of

social organization that is typically attributed to Hellenistic religions; rather, his “urgent entreaties” to the high priest to be initiated were met by a warning “to guard most carefully against [such] overeagerness” (*Met.* 11.21). For, according to the priest:

the day on which each person can be initiated was marked by a nod from the goddess, and that the priest who ought to administer the rites was likewise chosen by her providence, and that even the expenses required for the ceremony were determined by a similar command (*Met.* 11.21).

Initiation into the mysteries, in other words, like membership in any Hellenistic religious group, required invitation by the deities, or, what was the same thing, by their institutional representatives—a kind of sacerdotal imperative not to “call us; we’ll call you”.⁶⁵ This divine call came both in waking visions, as to the Dionysian “stranger” in Euripides’ *The Bacchae* or to Paul on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:3-6), or through the practice of incubation, in a dream, as to Lucius.

Lucius awaits his divine invitation to Isiac membership at a house rented for the occasion within the precincts of the Isis sanctuary at Cenchræ, the port city of Corinth. He spends his time here as “an inseparable companion of the priests” (*sacerdotum individuus*) (*Met.* 11.19). It is perhaps not too venturesome to suggest that the sense of *individuus* in this passage is that of “socialization”, the process whereby a prospective member who is outside the Isiac society, that is, who is *dividuus*, becomes received as a full member, a transaction of social inclusion that culminated with the formal ceremony of initiation.

Following his initiation into the society of Isis, Lucius is finally able to return home (*Met.* 11.24), to his friends and parents (*Met.* 11.26). He now acknowledges, however, the priest of Isis as his spiritual father (*Met.* 11.26) and the universal goddess herself as his loving mother (*Met.* 11.25). These spiritually constructed kin relations replace Lucius’ natural parents as the basis for the social unity of his new collective identity.⁶⁶

Like the mystery cults, the early Christian societies also based social inclusion upon distinctive claims of spiritual kinship. In a paradigm of social reorientation and inclusion more dramatic than anything suggested for membership in the Isis cult, Jesus is portrayed by some of these first Christians as requiring the rejection

of one's natural family. According to the synoptic gospels, when the claims of Jesus' family were opposed to that of political authority (Mt. 12:38; Mk. 3:6, 22), Jesus replies by suggesting a third theory of social relationship:

'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' And stretching out his hand towards his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother' (Mt. 12:46-50//Mk. 3:31-35; Lk. 8:19-21).

Henceforth, Christianity was to be defined, according to this same tradition, as the society of those who have "left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for...[Jesus'] sake and for the gospel" (Mk. 10:29//Mt. 19:29 and Lk. 18:29). For the Jesus societies, in other words, as for other Hellenistic religious groupings, fictive kinship claims supplanted the ascription of identity by birth with a cosmopolitan ideology of acquired subcultural identity.

The anti-individualistic ideology of the early Christians is perhaps best encapsulated in their so-called "great commandment" to "love your neighbor as yourself". This social imperative is cited throughout the New Testament corpus: by the synoptic gospels (Mt. 5:43, 19:19, 22:39; Mk. 12:31; Lk. 10:27), by Paul (Rom. 12:10, 13:9; Gal. 5:14), by the traditions of James (Jas. 2:8) and John (1 Jn. 2:10, 3:10, 4:21), and even in Christian gnosticism, that supposedly most individualistic of traditions (Gos. Th. 25). The crucial question, implicit in this commandment but posed explicitly only by the gospel of Luke, is: "who is [and who is not] my neighbor" (Lk. 10:29)? In response, the author of Luke relates the well-known "Story of the Good Samaritan" (Lk. 10:30-37). What has remained unremarked in this much analyzed parable is that the primary characteristic accorded neighborliness is *epimeleia*, precisely that criterion of Socratic care that we have seen to be so central to the social ethics of Hellenistic philosophy. The Samaritan is not only portrayed as the example of one who "took care" of the beleaguered victim in the story (*epemelēthē autou*), but as one who enjoins others also to "take care of him" (*epimelēthēti autou*) (Lk. 10:34-35). The point of this Lucan story, as of the "great commandment" generally, is to prescribe the priority of care for others, that is, of social claims, over any individualistic

concern for the self. For these Christians, to “take care”, like the ancient injunction to self-knowledge, referred “to the drawing of... social boundaries”.⁶⁷

No one in the New Testament is portrayed as successfully suing for membership in any of the Jesus movements apart from impromptu invitation. Yet, in his study of the influence of Greek ideas on Christianity, the influential biblical scholar, Edwin Hatch, summarized Christian origins in terms of the conventional view of Hellenistic religions: “There is”, he concluded “no adequate evidence that, in the first age of Christianity, association was other than voluntary. It was profoundly individual. It assumed for the first time in history the infinite worth of the individual soul.”⁶⁸ Hatch’s view of the “original” Christians, decidedly more Protestant than historical as Jonathan Z. Smith has recently argued,⁶⁹ informs the work of many modern scholars who are still concerned with the question of “how the charismatic [that is, individualistic] fellowship of the apostolic Church”, that “original” Christianity “rediscovered” by the Protestant reformers, “gave rise to the [corporate] bureaucracy of Roman Catholicism.”⁷⁰

Although Hellenistic internationalism did challenge the classical view of a collective identity conferred by one’s city of origin—the view still represented by Aristotle—it did not challenge the social basis of identity by producing any ideology of individualism. Rather, it produced alternative strategies of social inclusion, strategies defined not by place of birth but by inclusion in a newly defined international plurality of social groupings in which membership was conferred by invitation and instruction.⁷¹ As with his conclusions concerning Hellenistic culture generally, Green, risking self-contradiction, concludes that religion during this period represented the “urge to retreat from self-determination, to seek authority outside the self”,⁷² and Griffiths must subsume his view of heightened individual concerns during the Hellenistic period to what he concedes is the “essentially communal” nature of religion in antiquity.⁷³ Salvation, in other words, in whatever Hellenistic discourse it may be articulated, is, at base, a social status confirmed by membership in a group deemed to have the power or the authority to confer this status.

The subcultural religious groups adapted to the claims of

Hellenistic cosmopolitanism in varying ways. Most of these formerly native cults adopted Greek language and culture as a technique of international communication and acceptance.⁷⁴ In addition, some, like that of Lucius' savior goddess, became universalized by elevating their deities from native soil to celestial enthronement where they might preside over their cult sites now redistributed throughout the terrestrial realm.⁷⁵ The Mithraic cults even managed to preserve a remarkably uniform iconography for their numerous, wide-spread sanctuaries.⁷⁶ However, the catholicity of these internationalized native cults was, in actuality a cosmopolitan fiction, as the local determinations of cult-practices, variations in iconographic and ideological interpretation, and flexibility in the indices of membership indicate. These cults were, in other words, neither charismatic nor episcopal, but congregational. Only the ancient Mysteries of Demeter retained their locative character, requiring all who would be initiate to journey to Eleusis, despite a challenge to this privilege of place by her colonial cult in Sicily.⁷⁷ And only the early Christians had the increasing audacity to aspire to a political realization of the Hellenistic ideal of utopian universalism—an aspiration that eventually won them imperial sanctions.

Individualism and Material Culture

In contrast to the early Christianities, for which literary remains have survived alongside the archaeological,⁷⁸ many religious practices in the Hellenistic period are documented largely from their material remains. Mithraic iconography is a well-known case.⁷⁹ A less well-known example is the exquisite terracotta figurines produced during this period and found throughout Greece and Italy. These molded products of "a large-scale industry",⁸⁰ are being examined by historians for what they might reveal of everyday life,⁸¹ an area of historical investigation that, until recently, has been relatively neglected. However, these figurines, mass-produced in an estimated "tens of thousand",⁸² are also adduced as examples of Hellenistic individualism—an expression, in the words of one art historian, of "human needs in touching portrayals of emotion."⁸³ Although this claim may be understandable given the individualism

conventionally attributed to Hellenistic culture by its leading scholars, it is, nevertheless, as curious a conclusion as had it been made of a discarded bin of plastic Jesuses. The intent of this analogy is not to denigrate the piety expressed either through the ritual use of the Hellenistic figurines or by the placing of plastic statuettes on automobile dashboards. After all, as we have been reminded in a recent study of "The Medieval Virgin as Object", there is, in "the structure of religious belief—the structure that binds believer to object—...no interest in or place given to recording anything having to do with [the] production, sales, or manufacture" of religious objects.⁸⁴ The issue, rather, is the appropriateness of an essentially Protestant interpretation of such palpable cult objects as the outward expressions of an inward or individualistic "piety". The very ubiquity of the Hellenistic terracotta figurines, as of plastic dashboard statuettes, suggests that a more appropriate catchment in which to situate their significance might be an ideology of social inclusion rather than one of individualistic expression. Indeed, "piety" in antiquity—*eusebeia* in Greek, *pietas* in Latin—designated techniques for establishing "right relationships", among humans as well as those between humans and deities.

The homes, theatres, sanctuaries and tombs which are the provenance of the terracotta figurines are all loci of pietistic strategies for establishing right relationships. I have already alluded to the centrality of household organization, that is, of kin relations, as a basis for social unity in antiquity and of subcultural formation in the Hellenistic world. Similarly, the inseparability of entertainment from ritual in Greek culture is generally conceded, and suggested for Rome.

The significant majority of the terracottas, however, "are found either as votive offerings deposited in sanctuaries, or as objects accompanying the dead into the tomb."⁸⁵ Votary and funerary rites are both practiced in public, in the presence of priests and fellow worshipers, establishing bonds between the devotee and other devotees; both benefit many others who profit from the investment—craftsmen, shopkeepers, as well as all those sharing in the accompanying ritual banquets.⁸⁶ In contrast to the transitoriness of prayer and sacrifice, these practices, materialized in

the terracotta figurines, represented tangible and enduring proofs for the successful strategies of piety.⁸⁷ Where the place of the *polis* had been challenged and in places dissolved under the influence of Hellenistic cosmopolitanism, these practices and their material mementos memorialized a collective piety that reestablished a sense of place,⁸⁸ an enduring spatial framework in which a community might distribute its richest ideas and images with respect to specific locations and sanctuaries.⁸⁹

While the practices associated with votive offerings established a material link between the new social formations and cult sites, the use of these cult objects as funerary offerings ensured that the redefined locative definitions of social existence endured over time.⁹⁰ Such acts of memorialization as represented in Hellenistic votive and funerary practices and materialized in the terracotta figurines externalized the collective memory “on a geographical plane where it...[might] visually fix and affirm collective beliefs” and identity.⁹¹ I would suggest, in other words, that such figurines might better be considered material tokens of inclusion and membership in an enduring subculture rather than indications of any personal or individualistic enterprise.

Conclusion

Differing claims to the origins of individualism share only the conviction of a potential for the historical construction of self as an individual and for a consequent possibility of valuing such a construction. Nietzsche was perhaps the first explicitly to argue that “every human being was a ‘necessary consequence’ of an almost unintelligibly complex web of factors ‘assembled from the elements and influence of things past and present’ ”.⁹² He rejected, consequently, any idea of the self as something given. “ ‘[T]ruth’ ”, he concluded, “including the ‘truth’ about one’s self, ‘is not something there, that might be found or discovered—but something that must be created’ ”,⁹³ a process of historical construction that Michel Foucault analyzed under the rubric, “technologies of the self”.

We may leave it to intellectual historians to contest when an “ideal” of the individual self first became constructed from the

empirical reality of unitary existence and valued differently from that of the corporate subject; and to *mentalité* historians to establish when this emergent individual became collectively valued. And we might leave it for social theorists to ascertain to what extent an ideology of individualism ever actually produces an autonomous individual subject, or whether any ideology, including this one, is not itself a social strategy of subjection.

For the Greeks and Romans, in any case, any concept approaching that of modern, Western individualism was irrelevant. Their ideas and icons, discourse and practices, acts and gestures all confirm the anti-individualistic and collective character of a shared cultural ideal—an inter-individualistic construction of self that continues to mark the traditional societies of contemporary Greece.⁹⁴

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² Milan Kundera, *Immortality*, trans. P. Kussi (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), 7.

³ Graham Chapman *et al.*, *Monty Python's The Life of Brian (of Nazareth)* (New York: Fred Jordan Books/Grosset and Dunlap, 1979), 46.

⁴ —or with the anticipation of the intellectual formulations of Socrates by the healing practices of Aesclepius, introduced into Attica in 420 B.C. (Robert Garland, *Introducing New Gods* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992], 134).

⁵ Christopher Pelling (ed.), *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), V. For the argument for the origins of individualism in the Middle Ages, Pelling cites Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200* (New York: Harper, 1972); during the Renaissance: J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860; trans. S.G.C. Middleton, New York: Harper & Row, 1975); in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries: Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univer-

sity Press, 1972); to which we might add Marshall Berman, *The Politics of Authenticity* (New York: Atheneum, 1970); in the eighteenth century: Leonard Woolf, *After the Deluge: A Study in Communal Psychology* (London: Hogarth Press, 1931) and K. Marx, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 222-223; for "6th century" Greek lyric poetry, though not cited by name: Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, trans. T.G. Rosenmeyer (1953; New York: Dover, 1982).

⁶ Eli Sagan, *At the Dawn of Tyranny. The Origins of Individualism, Political Oppression, and the State* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 301; following, on this point, E. Durkheim, *On the Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 195.

⁷ Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), 1:226, n 85; 443, n 7; see 391-401. But Jacob Neusner argues that in Judaism, "the individual's life always is lived with the people"; in "The Virtues of the Inner Life in Formative Judaism", *Tikkun* 1 (1986): 72-83.

⁸ Louis Dumont, for example, "A Modified View of Our Origins: The Christian Beginnings of Modern Individualism", *Religion* 12 (1982): 1-27, or Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988), 96; for recent bibliography but somewhat ambivalent argument, see Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, "Caro salutis cardo: Shaping the Person in Early Christian Thought", *History of Religions* 30 (1990): 25-50.

⁹ Pelling, V.

¹⁰ For a discussion of individualistic expression in Stoic thought, for example, see Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Stoic Philosophy and the Concept of the Person", in: Christopher Gill (ed.), *The Person and the Human Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990): 109-135. I am indebted to Professor Engberg-Pedersen for calling my attention to his most interesting article.

¹¹ Louis Dumont, *Essays on Individualism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 25. Dumont's distinction between "individual" and the "ideology of individualism" is based in the French tradition of sociology beginning with Emile Durkheim (his 1898 article on "L'individualisme et les intellectuels", for example, reprinted in English translation in W.S.F. Pickering [ed.], *Durkheim on Religion. A Selection of Readings with Bibliographies* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975], 59-73), and specially, the work of Durkheim's nephew, Marcel Mauss (Dumont, 1, see also 1-8, 183-201). Although not specifically referred to by Dumont, Mauss' 1938 article, "Une catégorie de l'esprit humain: La notion de personne, celle de 'moi'" (now reprinted in English translation in M. Carrinthers — S. Collins — S. Lukes [eds.], *The Category of the Person. Anthropology, Philosophy, History* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 1-25) is fundamental. Here Mauss first distinguished between "individual" as the empirical object of observation and "person" as the construct of cultural and historical context. It is the "system of ideas and values current in a given social milieu" that Dumont refers to as an "ideology" (Dumont, 9). The "ideology of individualism", then, refers to those social constructs which value the individual (or the person) above the collective. In addition to the discussions, both theoretical and historical, by Dumont and by Carrinthers-Collins-Lukes based on the distinction between the empirical individual and its individualistic construction, see also Lukes, *Individualism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), and H.G. Kippenberg — Y.B. Kuiper — A.F. Sanders (eds.), *Concepts of Person in Religion and Thought* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1990).

¹² *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v.

¹³ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, rev. ed., trans. Henry Reeve (London and New York: The Colonial Press, 1900), II.2.2: 104.

¹⁴ Steven Lukes, *Individualism*, 3-16; *individualisme* was derived in turn from the adjective, *individuel*, documented since 1490: *Grand Larousse de la langue française* (Paris: Librairie Larousse), 4 (1975): s.v.

¹⁵ E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 76; M.I. Finley, "Generalizations in Ancient History", in: Louis Gottschalk (ed.), *Generalization in the Writing of History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 19-35, esp. 23.

¹⁶ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History* (1840; New York: Dutton 1956); see Robert Stover, "Great Man Theory of History" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1972), vol. 3: 378-382.

¹⁷ Whatever the validity of dating the conclusion of a Hellenistic period of political history with Octavian's conquest of Egypt, the periodization of cultural history: of the history of thought, of religion, of art, simply does not conform to the relatively sudden transformations of power associated with military conquest. I do not, consequently, date the conclusion of a Hellenistic cultural period with the reign of Augustus and the beginning of a new with that "Great Man" born, according to the Gospel attributed to Luke, during his reign (Lk. 2:1), but with the establishment of Christianity as the new house of culture in the West, the *terminus a quo* of which may be marked by the edicts of Theodosius prohibiting paganism in the final decade of the fourth century A.D.

¹⁸ J.G. Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, 3 vols. (1836-43; 2nd ed., 1877; new edition by Erich Bayer, 1952-53; München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980), I, 3.

¹⁹ Whereas the polis *ideal* was challenged, the practical effectiveness of this political unit continued to be felt throughout the Hellenistic period; see Erich S. Gruen, "The Individual and the Hellenistic Community", presentation to a symposium "The Individual and the Cosmos in the Hellenistic World", 9 February 1991, The College at New Paltz.

²⁰ W.W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, 3rd ed. rev. with G.T. Griffith (New York: Meridian, 1961), 193; 79.

²¹ George H. Sabine and Thomas L. Thorsen, *A History of Political Theory*, 4th ed. (Hinsdale, Il; Dryden, 1973), 125-32.

²² J. Gwyn Griffiths, "Hellenistic Religions" in *Religions of Antiquity. Selections from the Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Robert M. Seltzer (New York: MacMillan, 1989), 238.

²³ Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 587.

²⁴ Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1963), 5-7, 241-65.

²⁵ John M. Rist, *Human Value. A Study in Ancient Philosophical Ethics* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), 147.

²⁶ Employed pejoratively, *individualisme* has the sense of "tendency towards egotism" (Balzac [1839]; *Grand Larousse*, s.v.).

²⁷ Tocqueville, II. 2.2: 104.

²⁸ W.W. Tarn, "Arrian", *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed., eds. N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) 122-123.

²⁹ See for example, the popular *Alexander Romance*, falsely attributed to

Callisthenes, now in new translation by Ken Dowden in: B.P. Reardon (ed.), *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) 650-735.

³⁰ Trans., Aubrey de Selincourt, *Arrian. The Campaigns of Alexander* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1971), 349, 213.

³¹ Eliza Gregory Wilkins, "Know Thyself" in *Greek and Latin Literature* (1917; Chicago: Ares, 1980), 18, 41.

³² J.R. Hamilton, "Notes" to Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, trans. Aubrey de Selincourt (New York: Viking Penguin, 1971), 350 n. 4.

³³ Wilkins, 18.

³⁴ Frederick M. Schroeder, "The Self in Ancient Religious Experience" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, ed. A.H. Armstrong (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 337-359: 347.

³⁵ Schroeder, 347.

³⁶ Wilkins, 66.

³⁷ Wilkins, 66.

³⁸ For the influence of the *Alcibiades* on Plotinus, see Gerard J.P. O'Daly, *Plotinus' Philosophy of the Self* (New York: Barnes and Nobel, 1973), 10-11.

³⁹ Jean-Pierre Vernant, "The Individual within the City-State", in: Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. F.I. Zeitlin (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991), 330.

⁴⁰ Louis Gernet, *The Anthropology of Ancient Greece*, trans. J. Hamilton and B. Nagy (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 12.

⁴¹ Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self", in: Luther H. Martin, et al., *Technologies of the Self. A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 26, 31.

⁴² Schroeder, 337.

⁴³ Foucault, "Technologies of the Self", in Martin.

⁴⁴ Stroumsa, 49.

⁴⁵ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Garden City, NJ: Anchor Books, 1959), 35, 42; see also Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 28.

⁴⁶ Stroumsa, 27; Rist, 145-53.

⁴⁷ Tocqueville, II.2.5.

⁴⁸ W. Hampton Sides, "Subcultures: Our Obsessions, Our Selves" *The Washington Post*, Sunday, January 13, 1991), see now his *Stomping grounds: A Pilgrim's Progress through Eight American Subcultures* (New York: Morrow, 1992), 17-18.

⁴⁹ Even those who argue for the advocacy of an individualism by Plato must concede that its guarantee was the overriding *raison d'être* of the *polis*: see, for example, Robert W. Hall, *Plato and the Individual* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), 2, 5.

⁵⁰ Patrick Atherton, "The City in Ancient Religious Experience" in: *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, ed. A.H. Armstrong (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 314-336: 332.

⁵¹ Tarn, 93. The classic work on the Greek associations of the Hellenistic period remains that of Franz Poland, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1909), summarized by Marcus N. Tod, in *Sidelights on Greek History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1932), and in his article on "Clubs, Greek" in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 254-255. Poland builds upon the work of Paul Foucart, *Des associations religieuses chez les Grecs* (1873; New York: Arno Press, 1975). On the Latin *collegia*, see Jean Waltzing, *Etude historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez*

les Romains, 4 vols. (Louvain: Peeters, 1895-1900). The investigations of Foucart, Poland and Waltzing were made possible by Th. Mommsen's pioneering monograph, *De Collegiis et Sodaliciis* (Kiel: Schwersiana, 1843).

⁵² A.N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), 6.

⁵³ Whitehead's definition of religion, apparently influenced by that of William James, represents one of the most pervasive of modern theories of religion, namely, that all religious phenomena are based upon individual religious experiences, the paradigm of which is mysticism. The first significant *theoretical* attempt to argue this position was by Jonathan Edwards in his "Treatise Concerning Religious Affections", published in 1746, which has been judged by at least one scholar of American Puritan thought to be "the most profound explanation of the religious psychology in all American literature" (Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* [New York: W. Sloan, 1949], 177). "True religion", Edwards wrote, "consists so much in the Affections,"—a Puritan expression for feelings or experiences—"that there can be no true Religion without them" (Jonathan Edwards, "Treatise on Religious Affections", in H.S. Smith, R.T. Handy, L.A. Loetscher [eds.], *American Christianity. A Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*. Vol I: 1607-1820 [New York: Charles Scribners, 1960], 341-349: 342). The primary "objective ground" of these Affections, he argued, "is the transcendently excellent and amiable Nature of divine things, as they are in themselves" (emphasis added) (Edwards, 345). For Edwards, in other words, religion was based on a pure, unmediated, personal experience of the sacred. This primary emphasis on individual experience relegates social practices of religion, like ritual, to outward—and secondary—expressions of the inward grace so important to reformation theology. At the beginning of the twentieth century, William James defended essentially the same view of religion that had first been argued by Edwards, but now in the discourse of science—the newly defined 'discipline' of psychology that James was so instrumental in popularizing. In his classic Gifford Lectures on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James wrote that religion consists of "the feelings...and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* [New York: The Modern Library, 1902], 31-32). For James, as for Edwards, then "personal religion will prove itself more fundamental than either theology or ecclesiasticism. Churches, when once established", he asserted, "live at second-hand upon tradition; but the *founders* of every church owed their power originally to the fact of their *direct personal communion with the divine*" (second emphasis added) (James, 31). Consequently, in the conclusion of James, "personal religious experience has its roots and centre in mystical states of consciousness" (James, 370). A dominant popular as well as theoretical explanation of religion is thus based in the Reformation theological tradition of a faith that is confirmed in the individual experience of grace and constructed out of a culturally disseminated and psychologized theology of revival. See Luther H. Martin, "The Academic Study of Religion in the United States: Historical and Theoretical Considerations", *Religio, Revue pro Religionistiku* 1 (1993), 73-80: 76-78.

⁵⁴ E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1971), 243.

⁵⁵ Griffiths, "Hellenistic Religions", 238.

⁵⁶ Green, 588.

⁵⁷ Atherton, 332.

⁵⁸ Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 11, following B. Snell, see Burkert, 11, n. 57. See my review of Burkert, in *Critical Review of Books in Religion*, 1989 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 288-290.

⁵⁹ Plato proposed the death penalty for the establishment of private cults which, he believed, would weaken the *polis* by giving individuals the means of pursuing their own ends (*Lg.* 909-910).

⁶⁰ Rist, 147.

⁶¹ Paul Veyne, "The Roman Empire", in *A History of Private Life*, Vol. 1, ed. Paul Veyne, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 231.

⁶² William M. Brashear, *A Mithraic Catechism from Egypt (p. Berol. 21196)*, Tyche Supplementband (Wien: Verlag Adolf Holzhausens Nfg, 1992), 15.

⁶³ Brashear, 20.

⁶⁴ W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 276. The inscription, *hominibus bagisbatam* (CIMRM 823), which should be read as *hominibus vagis vitam*, actually appears on the base of a sculpture of "Bacchus with a Satyr, a Maenad, Silenus, and Pan" that was found in the Walbrook Mithraeum. See J.M.C. Toynbee, *Art in Roman Britain*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Phaidon Press, 1963), 128-30.

⁶⁵ A.D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (1933; London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 152-155.

⁶⁶ Henry Sumner Maine, *Ancient Law* (1861; New York: Dorset Press, 1986), 152, see also 104, 213-14. The centrality of the notion of family to social organization in antiquity was emphasized also by Maine's contemporary, Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City*, trans. Willard Small (1873; Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1979), 86, 89.

⁶⁷ Stroumsa, 35, 46-7.

⁶⁸ Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, ed., A.M. Fairbairn, 2nd ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1891), 334.

⁶⁹ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine. On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 59-62; see also Veyne, 231-2.

⁷⁰ Benjamin Nelson, "Weber, Troeltsch, Jellinek as Comparative Historical Sociologists", *Sociological Analysis* 36 (1975), 232n.

⁷¹ Jonas, 5-6.

⁷² Green, 586.

⁷³ Griffiths, 238.

⁷⁴ See G.W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990), esp. ch. 1.

⁷⁵ Luther H. Martin, *Hellenistic Religions. An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 76.

⁷⁶ Luther H. Martin, "Reflections on the Mithraic Tauroctony as Cult Image". *Studies in Mithraism*, ed. J.R. Hinells (Rome: "L'erma" di Bretschneider, forthcoming).

⁷⁷ Luther H. Martin, "Greek Goddesses and Grain: the Sicilian Connection", *Helios* 17 (1990), 251-261.

⁷⁸ See G.F. Snyder, *Ante Pacem. Archaeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985).

⁷⁹ I have suggested a social interpretation of the Mithraic tauroctony in "Reflections on the Mithraic Tauroctony as Cult Scene".

⁸⁰ C. Bradford Wells, *Alexander and the Hellenistic World* (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1970), 210; Jaimee P. Uhlenbrock, "The Coroplast and his Craft", in *The Coroplast's Art. Greek Terracottas of the Hellenistic World*, ed., Jaimee P. Uhlenbrock (New Rochelle, NY: Caratzas, 1990), 15-31: 16.

⁸¹ Uhlenbrock, ed., *passim*.

⁸² Wells, 210.

⁸³ William Mierse, from course description of Art 282: Seminar. "Hellenistic" in "Memorandum To: Art Majors and University Advisors", From: Christie Fengler-Stephany, Chair, Art Department, dated October 31, 1990, describing "Spring 1991 Course Offerings" at The University of Vermont.

⁸⁴ J.E. Ziegler, "The Medieval Virgin as Object. Art or Anthropology?", *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 16 (1989), 251-64: 257.

⁸⁵ Malcolm Bell III, "Hellenistic Terracottas of Southern Italy and Sicily", in Uhlenbrock, 64-70: 66; on these figurines as votive offerings, see also: 38, 42, 55.

⁸⁶ Adapted from Walter Burkert's insights concerning votive practices, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 14.

⁸⁷ F.T. van Straten, "Gifts for the Gods", in H.S. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope, and Worship* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 74-75.

⁸⁸ W.H.D. Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings. An Essay in the History of Greek Religion* (1902; New York: Arno Press, 1975), 357; Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place. Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 129.

⁸⁹ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. F.J. and V.Y. Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 139-40, 151.

⁹⁰ On the relationship of collective memory to cultic practices materialized by Hellenistic terracotta figurines dedicated to Attis, see J.Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 129.

⁹¹ Patrick H. Hutton, "Collective Memory and Collective Mentalities: The Halbwachs-Aries Connection", *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 15 (1988), 311-22: 314. The classic work on such externalization through commemoration is Halbwachs's study of the cultural geography of the Holy Land, *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre Saint* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1941), see also Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place*, 115-16.

⁹² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 34-35 (I, §39, §41), cited in the formulation by James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 116.

⁹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: 1966) 26 (§19), *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York 1967) 298 (§552), cited in the formulation by Miller, 69.

⁹⁴ Adamantia Pollis, "Political Implications of the Modern Greek Concept of Self", *British Journal of Sociology* 16 (1965): 29-47, 32; Charles Stewart, *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), xv, 38, 87.

ARNOLD VAN GENNEP AND THE RISE OF FRENCH SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

WOUTER W. BELIER

Summary

Van Gennep's contribution to the science of religion can be assessed from various points of view. Most scientists concentrate on Van Gennep's often quoted *Les rites de passage*. Other scientists call him the "Master of French ethnology" or the "Master of the study of French Folklore". Van Gennep is seen as a heroic martyr, harassed by academic interests. A third point of view concentrates on the question why Van Gennep was excluded from the *Année sociologique* group. This matter of Van Gennep being excluded from the *Année sociologique* group is theoretically the most interesting one. Van Gennep discussed methodological questions with the members of this group. Through this discussion we can gain a clearer understanding of the rise of early French sociology.

The purpose of this article is to examine those various points of view. After discussing the assessment concentrating on *Les rites de passage*, the assessment by his admirers Belmont and Zumwalt, I will give space to the discussion between Van Gennep and the members of the *Année sociologique* group. Important items in this discussion are those concerning the interpretation of totemism as an archaic institution, the relation between individuals and society, the ontological status of society and the empirical nature of social sciences.

In the conclusion I will assess those various points of view. The examination and conclusion will be preceded by a biographical sketch and a survey of Van Gennep's oeuvre.

1. Introduction

Van Gennep's contribution to the science of religion can be assessed from various points of view. Most scientists concentrate on Van Gennep's often quoted *Les rites de passage*. According to those scientists Van Gennep was a structuralist *avant la lettre*. Although Van Gennep judged his *Les rites de passage* as very important, it is just a small part of his complete oeuvre.

Other scientists approach all his work in a positive, sometimes even euphoric way. As an intellectual libertine, Van Gennep did not fit in the mouldy academic circuit. According to those scientists he was however the "Master of French ethnology" or the "Master of the study of French Folklore". Every attempt to come to an objective evaluation of his work has been given up. Van Gennep is a heroic martyr, harassed by academic interests.

For such a positive assessment of Van Gennep's theories, his exclusion from the *Année sociologique* group is a problem. This group led by Durkheim, was said to keep him at a distance. They did not take him seriously.¹ Moreover, they criticized his publications fiercely, as stated by Lukes: "It is striking that van Gennep was ignored and excluded by Durkheim and his colleagues."² The often quoted remark about this matter stems from Needham. Following Evans-Pritchard,³ Needham remarked that "[Van Gennep] kept — or, more likely, 'was kept' — away from the academic world of Paris, where Durkheim and his followers were establishing a tradition to which he might well have been invited to make a distinctive contribution. This is one of the most obscure aspects of Van Gennep's life, and a puzzle which it would be important to the history of ideas to see elucidated."⁴ This matter of Van Gennep being excluded from the *Année sociologique* group is theoretically the most interesting one. Van Gennep discussed methodological questions with the members of this group. Through this discussion we can gain a clearer understanding of the rise of early French sociology.

The purpose of this article is to examine those various points of view. Was the criticism appropriate? Was the eulogy deserved? I will concentrate on the discussion between Van Gennep and the members of the *Année sociologique* group. The *Année sociologique* group ignored Van Gennep's work on folklore, as they ignored the whole science of folklore. Mauss described the opinion of the *Année sociologique* group as follows: folkloristic data belong to the common people — they are unsystematic, they are relics of another time and in general no longer correspond to essential states and functions in society — whereas the institutions, techniques and regimes studied by history and ethnography are integrated, organic facts, characteristic of the societies in question.⁵ Consequently, I will focus on Van Gennep as the "Master of French ethnology".

In the conclusion I will assess those various points of view. The examination and conclusion will be preceded by a biographical sketch and a survey of Van Gennep's oeuvre.

2. A biographical sketch

Arnold Van Gennep was born in 1873 in Ludwigsburg in the then kingdom Württemberg in the South of what was to become

Germany. His father was a descendant of French immigrants.⁶ His mother descended from a house of Dutch patricians. In 1879 Van Gennep and his mother moved to Lyon. After graduating from the High School at Grenoble, Van Gennep studied at the *École des langues orientales* and the *École des Hautes Études*. He aimed at a diplomatic career. After his marriage and after problems with his father resulting from this marriage, Van Gennep and his wife left for Russian Poland, where he earned his living as a French teacher. In 1901 he returned to Paris. Because of his knowledge of a great number of languages, he obtained a post as head of a translation-department with the Government. In 1904 his *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar* was published, called his "thèse" by his daughter Ketty. It was followed in 1906 by his *Mythes et légendes d'Australie*. In 1908, Van Gennep living at that time in a Paris suburb, viz. Bourg-la-Reine, gave up his position with the Government, relying on his publications and translations as a source of income. Between 1912 and 1915 Van Gennep held a chair for Ethnography at the university of Neuchâtel in Switzerland, the only academic function he obtained. Because he criticized the Swiss Government for her pro-German policies and because of an anti-German publication, he had to leave again in 1915. He fulfilled his military obligations in France and after the war he resumed work for the Government. In 1922 he was offered a lecture-tour in the United States and in Canada. Because his request for leave was refused, he resigned. The lecture-tour was quite exhausting. Van Gennep suffered from a cerebral hemorrhage. After a short periode of rest, during which he worked as a chicken-breeder in the south of France, he returned to Bourg-la-Reine. Again his only source of income were his publications and translations. He was also immersed in the research and collecting of French folklore. After 1945 the *Recherche Scientifique* gave him a grant. From now on he concentrated on the publication of his *Manuel de Folklore français contemporain*. He died in 1957.

3. Survey of Van Gennep's oeuvre

Van Gennep's oeuvre is voluminous. His bibliography compiled by his daughter contains 437 titles. In addition she published a list of magazines containing Van Gennep's most important review

articles. Those publications belonged on the one hand to the field of ethnography and on the other hand to the field of the study of folklore. Up to and including 1924 his publications belonged to both fields of study. After 1924 Van Gennep's only concern was the study of French folklore.⁷ According to Van Gennep there was however no essential difference between ethnography and the study of folklore. "Ethnography, folklore: Van Gennep seems to make very little distinction between the terms. And indeed, for him they formed a single discipline dealing with collective, living facts."⁸ He also published in the field of numismatics. Giving consideration to Van Gennep's discussion with the members of the *Année sociologique* group some publications will be mentioned frequently. Below follows a short survey of his ethnographic works. For a thorough discussion of Van Gennep's folkloristic oeuvre I refer to Belmont's and Zumwalt's publications.⁹

Van Gennep's first extensive ethnographical study concerned representations of tabu and totemism on Madagascar. This study was not only directed at a scientific audience. Madagascar was at that time the most recent French colony and Van Gennep wrote his study "dans la persuasion où je suis que l'étude approfondie des sociétés demi-civilisées est de première nécessité pour quiconque veut faire oeuvre de colonisation durable."¹⁰ Van Gennep referred in this study frequently to the achievements of sociology. He wished to test the usefulness of the various sociological theories. He referred explicitly to the theories of Frazer, Crawley, Marillier, Jevons, Smith, Hartland, Wilken and Taylor.¹¹ The debate he contemplated was between the representatives of the dynamic and the animistic school and adherents of contagionistic magical theories. One part of the book contains an extensive collection of facts stemming from the ethnographical literature referring to Madagascan representations of tabu or prohibitive rules. In the other part those representations of tabu related to the prohibition of plants and animals are studied within the framework of a possible totemism. After examining the question of the definition of totemism, Van Gennep concludes that on Madagascar there exists zoolatry. There is, however, no connection between this veneration of animals and totemism.

In his 1906 study Van Gennep edited a number of Australian myths and legends translated into French. Up to that time com-

parable works only existed in English and German. The 106 annotated myths and legends were preceded by an introduction consisting of a motley collection of themes all related to the study of Australian Aboriginal cultures. Some of those themes were previously published as separate articles.

Van Gennep's study into the *rites de passage* dating from 1909¹² describes the characteristic patterns of a large group of rituals. Prior to this Van Gennep had noticed the importance of this pattern.¹³ In an introductory chapter, isolated from the rest of the book, Van Gennep tried to define religion and magic and to give a classification of rites. Then Van Gennep discussed rituals accompanying the transfer from one situation to the other. Examples are the moving from one place to the other, the various phases in the life-cycle of individuals: pregnancy, birth, youth, rites of initiation, marriage and death. Van Gennep concluded that those rites can be distinguished as *rites de séparation*, *rites de marge* and *rites d'agrégation*, in the English translation of *Les rites de passage* as *rites of separation*, *transition rites* and *rites of incorporation*. The aim of his study was the following: "Our interest lies not in the particular rites but in their essential significance and their relative positions within ceremonial wholes—that is, their order. ... Beneath a multiplicity of forms, either consciously expressed or merely implied, a typical pattern always recurs: *the pattern of the rites of passage*."¹⁴ Because of this emphasis on pattern, Zumwalt and Senn classify Van Gennep as a functionalist or as a structuralist.¹⁵

The humoristic (?) *Les Demi-savants* (1911) and a study concerning the evolution of forms of narration *La formation des légendes* (1912) will be excluded. *L'état actuel du problème totémique* (1920) will be referred to frequently. In this Ph. D. "thèse" for the University of Paris Van Gennep examined in the first part the history of the study of totemism. In the second part he made an inventory of the remaining totemistic representations in the Mediterranean. In the third part Van Gennep examined those theories which could lead to a better understanding of totemism. Totemism must not be studied as a religious phenomenon but as a social one.

4. Concentration on *Les rites de passage*

One of the above mentioned points of view for assessment concentrates exclusively on Van Gennep's *Les rites de passage*. In the

biography about her father Ketty van Gennep remarked: “Enfin il voulait avoir son nom dans le *Larousse*; il voulait attacher son nom à une oeuvre originale.”¹⁶ He saw his hopes fulfilled. He was given mention in the *Larousse* and usually Van Gennep’s name is automatically associated with his *Les rites de passage*.¹⁷ Van Gennep himself judged this study to be very important. Belmont qualifies *Les rites de passage* as a blueprint for all his future research into French ethnography.¹⁸ Illustrating this she quotes Van Gennep: “I confess sincerely that though I set little store by my other books, my *Rites de passage* is like a part of my own flesh, and was the result of a kind of inner illumination that suddenly dispelled a sort of darkness in which I had been floundering for almost ten years.”¹⁹ Certainly, *Les rites de passage* was the study which made Van Gennep famous after 1960. In this year the English translation by Vizedom and Caffee was published. Van Gennep’s study was labelled on the front-cover as a “classical study of cultural celebrations” and on the back-cover it was said that Van Gennep’s phrase *the rites of passage* “has become a part of the language of anthropology and sociology”. In the introduction Kimball classifies this study to be Van Gennep’s unique contribution.²⁰ However, according to Kimball, Van Gennep’s study had led a marginal life.²¹ This marginality of Van Gennep seems to be a common statement.²² Kimball states that Van Gennep’s study is an empirical study of ritual behaviour and its consequences for life-cycle crises.²³ Those studies were lacking in a time of increasing secularization and declining importance of sacred ceremonialism.²⁴ So, publication of *Rites of Passage* in an English edition was of considerable importance. According to Kimball, Tozzer was the first one who mentioned Van Gennep’s rites of passage.²⁵ In a chapter about the crisis in the life of the individual, Tozzer referred to Van Gennep. Rites undertaken at times of birth, adolescence, marriage and death, conducting the individual from one state or situation to another are rites of passage.²⁶ However, already in 1910 in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Starr reviewed Van Gennep’s study very positively.²⁷ In those early years, emphasis of the application of the scheme was on circumcision rites,²⁸ on initiations in primitive society,²⁹ on crisis-ceremonialism,³⁰ on crises in the live of the individual³¹ and on puberty rites.³² In accordance with this emphasis, Chapple and

Coon differentiated between rites of passage, associated with individuals and non-periodic changes such as birth and death, illness and so on and rites of intensification, associated with groups and periodic changes.³³ Van Gennep, however, did not differentiate between the categories of rites of passage and rites of intensification.³⁴ This emphasis on individuals and non-periodic changes we saw also in the works of Junod, Parsons and Tozzer. Moreover, the new name of the rites of passage, *crisis-ceremonialism*, *life crisis*, *crisis rites*³⁵ etc. introduces an interpretative element.³⁶ Chapple and Coon were students of Tozzer. To the latter they were "specifically indebted for his recognition of the value of Van Gennep's little appreciated work in the Rites of Passage."³⁷ So, Tozzer, Chapple and Coon were propagating an individualistic, non-periodical theory of the rites of passage. Kimball, the instigator of the 1960 translation, was part of this network.³⁸ Together with Arensberg, he was just like Van Gennep immersed in studying folksociety. Kimball's interpretation of Van Gennep was also an individualistic one, emphasizing life-cycle crises.

Needham also held *Les rites de passage* in high esteem. He called this monograph "a learned disquisition which, for all its analytical acuity, impresses largely by the assiduity of its writer in compiling such laborious collections of ethnographic facts. The picture of Van Gennep most likely to be suggested by it is that of a staid and solid personage not much different from many such figures of the time."³⁹ Needham and Leach were the leaders of the British neo-structuralism.⁴⁰ They leaned heavily on the work of Lévi-Strauss. Leach was even thought of as the English prophet of Lévi-Strauss.⁴¹ Needham and Leach published a series of translations of French sociological classics under the aegis of their teacher Evans-Pritchard.⁴² Studies of Mauss,⁴³ Hertz,⁴⁴ Durkheim and Mauss,⁴⁵ Hubert and Mauss⁴⁶ and Van Gennep⁴⁷ were translated. The above mentioned homage to Van Gennep paid by Needham is mere lip-service. Leach made a more extensive use of Van Gennep's tripartite scheme.⁴⁸ To a certain degree however, Van Gennep owed his renown to Turner's work.⁴⁹ Turner calls Van Gennep "the father of formal processual analysis."⁵⁰ He sought to establish a general theory of society which was based on Van Gennep's insights.⁵¹

It is at this point in time very difficult to make a proper assess-

ment of Van Gennep's *Les rites de passage*. His terminology has become now generally accepted and is used without knowledge of its origin.⁵² Besides, Van Gennep was not the first to emphasize the processual character of ritual. He was preceded by Mauss and Hubert in their study of the sacrifice⁵³ and by Hertz in his study of collective representations of death.⁵⁴

Mauss reviewed Van Gennep's study very critically. On the one hand Mauss remarked that rituals which are not a transition from sacred to profane and *vice versa* do not exist. Ritual behaviour always aims at changing the status of someone or something. Mauss concluded: "Portée à ce degré de généralité, la thèse devient un truisme."⁵⁵ On the other hand Van Gennep's study is a repository of facts dating from all times and stemming from the most various cultures. Mauss blames Van Gennep for his use of methods of the English anthropological school. "... l'auteur fait une sorte de randonnée à travers toute l'histoire et toute l'ethnographie... Nous avons souvent dit les inconvénients de ces revues tumultueuses."⁵⁶

An assessment of Van Gennep's contribution to the sociology of religion cannot be based exclusively or mainly on his *Les rites de passage*. This study is just a small part of his complete oeuvre. It owes its renown on the one hand to an individualistic, non-periodical interpretation and on the other hand to the emphasis on structure by British neo-structuralism and to Turner's use of Van Gennep's schemes. Van Gennep was not the only one to give a tripartite processual analysis. Mauss' criticism is certainly to the point.

5. The assessment by Belmont and Zumwalt

On the 23th of June 1953 Van Gennep celebrated his eightieth birthday. The community of Bourg-la-Reine and the *Fédération des Groupes Folkloristiques des Provinces Françaises et des Colonies* were present. Van Gennep was offered a reception in the town-hall and he was laurelled as the *Maître de Folklore Française*. He received a golden medal. One of his admirers, viz. G.-H. Rivière discussed Van Gennep's scientific work. Later a performance was given by 300

people from 22 provinces all dressed in their local costumes. This was accompanied by folk songs and folk dances. Later that evening Van Gennep lighted the St. John's fire.⁵⁷ Rivière in his introduction to Ketty Van Gennep's biography mentioned her father's "l'immense labeur, la brillante production d'une vie au service de la science."⁵⁸ It is no wonder that in this euphoric ambiance the discrepancy between Van Gennep's supposed scientific qualities and his failing academic career was felt as a very painful one. Belmont and Zumwalt try to explain this question. Zumwalt states that Van Gennep was a "leader in the field of French folklore and ethnology", but that "he remained an outcast from the French academic life."⁵⁹ Van Gennep "had puzzled intellectual historians for years."⁶⁰ The above mentioned discrepancy between Van Gennep's scientific merits and his academic status "casts a shadow of mystery on van Gennep's life."⁶¹ Zumwalt also wants to explain the reasons for this scientific ostracism. It was caused by the differences between Van Gennep and Durkheim and by the growing influence of the latter. Belmont points at Van Gennep's "independent attitude toward the official university establishment."⁶² She quotes an unpublished note by Van Gennep: "there grew up a fairly violent antagonism between all the sciences of man constituted in previous years as a result of the revival of Comtist sociology instigated by Durkheim... Closing ranks, the Durkheimists instituted a siege of these positions and within about twenty years successfully reduced them to subjection. Anyone who was not a member of their group was a 'marked man'."⁶³ Several times Belmont refers to Van Gennep's independent spirit which was the reason why "he did in fact avoid subjecting himself to the one course of indoctrination into social facts then available."⁶⁴ In 1988 Zumwalt elaborates her vision. Van Gennep was isolated but not of his own free will. Zumwalt refers to letters proving this.⁶⁵ In her explanation Van Gennep's missing academic success is also due to the growing influence of Durkheim. This interpretation is based on a remark made by Davy. The latter portrayed Durkheim as the prophet of a new religion assembling around him a group "to teach a doctrine, to have disciples and not merely students..."⁶⁶

6. *Discussion between Van Gennep and the members of the Année sociologique group*

In this section I will discuss Van Gennep's explicit criticism on theories which were formulated within the *Année sociologique* group. This criticism concentrated on the discussion about the interpretation of totemism, the importance of individuals in sociological theories and the ontological status of society. Besides, Van Gennep and the members of the *Année sociologique* group had different opinions regarding the nature of science.

a. The discussion about the interpretation of totemism

Mac Lennan's articles from 1869 and 1870 were the beginning of the study of totemism. In Van Gennep's days the existence of a coherent whole of phenomena, the totemistic complex was presupposed. Those phenomena were: exogamy of the totemistic clan; the application of the totem as a name for the clan; belief that the members of the clan and the totemistic animals stemmed from the same totem and that accordingly all were related; a taboo on killing or eating the totemistic animal and an attitude of religious veneration *vis à vis* the totem. According to Van Gennep, it is only justified to use the term *totemism* if all these phenomena are present. "Il faut donc rechercher si chacune des caractéristiques essentielles du totémisme coexiste à Madagascar avec la croyance à la parenté ou à la descendance animale du clan humain. Ainsi seulement il sera possible de décider si l'on est en droit de parler d'un totémisme malgache."⁶⁷ At Madagascar several elements of the totemistic complex were present, but "Cette croyance isolée *n'est pas le totémisme*."⁶⁸ On the basis of his research at Madagascar Van Gennep classified this isolated belief as zoolatry. Van Gennep illustrated the lack of consensus as regards the most important terms in the totemistic discussion as he quoted Haddon: "ce qui est décrit en un endroit comme du totémisme peut fort bien être essentiellement différent de ce qui est appelé totémisme ailleurs."⁶⁹

Another point coming up in the discussion several times was the following. The Australian cultures were regarded as the most archaic ones. In an evolutionistic approach they stood on the lowest steps. The Aruntas were a tribe living in Central-Australia. This

tribe and other Central-Australian tribes were initially classified by their investigators Spencer and Gillen as the most archaic cultures of Australia. For research into the origin of religion, the Arunta culture was a Stone Age laboratory. Durkheim, on the contrary regarded the Arunta culture as one of the most developed cultures of Australia. Lang and Hartland were of the same opinion. Initially, in an indirect remark,⁷⁰ Van Gennep agreed with Lang and Hartland. After two years, in an explicit discussion about this theme he changed his opinion. In the introduction to his compilation of Australian myths and legends, he devoted a section to this problem: "De la primitivité des Arunta."⁷¹ In this section Van Gennep expounded his view that there are no arguments in favor of a chronological priority of a system of male or of female descent. Lang's and Durkheim's arguments were not valid.⁷² They were based on the *a priori* assumption that a system of male descent must be more recent. This assumption was the consequence of European culture being heavily based on the last mentioned system. Van Gennep remarked: "que notre tendance inconsciente est de considérer la filiation masculine comme supérieure, comme culturellement postérieure à l'autre."⁷³ According to Van Gennep it is not possible to use the system of descent as an argument for a classification of the stage of development of the Arunta culture.

In a review of Durkheim's *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (1912) some of these points came up again. According to Van Gennep, Australian societies were "très complexes, très loin du simple et du primitif, mais très évoluées suivant des directions propres."⁷⁴ Durkheim did not formulate a theory on totemism. His study just dealt with the "force anonyme et impersonnelle", which lies at the root of totemism. A totem, however, is a very personal force.⁷⁵

In 1920 Van Gennep gave a survey of the debate on totemism, starting with the Mac Lennan 1869 article. This study contained articles published from 1917 on. To get a better understanding of the disturbed relation between Van Gennep and Durkheim this study came in fact too late. Durkheim died in 1917. Van Gennep dealt with totemism in general, but he left a lot of room for criticizing Durkheim's interpretation. Although Durkheim did not give any solution for problems regarding the origin and development of totemism, it was necessary to discuss his contributions to a general

theory about religion.⁷⁶ Van Gennep summed up the following critical points:

Durkheim's theories are based on the presumption that Australian societies are simple. They are not. They are as complex as more developed societies. These societies are neither uniform nor homogeneous. An unequivocal evolutionistic process of human civilization does not exist. In the variety of cultures we descry a variety of institutions. In some societies some of these institutions were developed in the extreme. Totemism in Central-Australia is such an institution. Therefore, totemism cannot be the basis for a general theory about the origin of religion.⁷⁷

Durkheim defines the totem as a name and as an emblem. According to Van Gennep those definitions are outdated. Determined to justify himself Durkheim is driven back on American data. This however, does damage to his preconceived scheme. Carried out in one ethnological field, Durkheim considered his study to be an "expérience bien faite."⁷⁸ Moreover, Durkheim's presuppositions are only valid for Central-Australian tribes.

Van Gennep compared the artificial constructions built by Durkheim to "les meilleures constructions des métaphysiciens hindous, des commentateurs musulmans et des scolastiques catholiques."⁷⁹ Van Gennep concluded that Durkheim's study intending to be an empirical interpretation of totemism, is not acceptable.⁸⁰

Summarizing Van Gennep's criticism in this section, the following may be stated. According to Van Gennep, Australian cultures are not the most simple cultures. Australian totemism was a highly developed institution and not a mere fossil. A theory about the origin of religion based on totemism resembles a house of cards. "C'est bien ce qui rend sa construction entière si fragile, puisque les bases en sont branlantes."⁸¹

b. Individuals and society

In the preceding section Durkheim's application of the sources was criticized. In this and in the next section theoretical items are the subject of debate. One of the main issues in the discussion between Van Gennep and Durkheim was the place of the individual in sociological theory. In 1904 Van Gennep emphasized the theoretical priority of social institutions over desires and actions of

isolated individuals. Moreover, “moins les groupes humains considérés sont civilisés, plus l’élément individuel est subordonné à l’élément sociale.”⁸² This remark is opposed to those we will meet in Van Gennep’s 1906 study. In this study explanations of social change were discussed. Van Gennep stated that “tout comme chez nous, dans les tribus australiennes, c’est l’individu qui invente et propose des modifications.”⁸³ The individual is a skilful manipulator of social changes. Van Gennep referred to illustrations in the ethnographic literature.⁸⁴ The individual element “dont M. Durkheim n’a cure”⁸⁵ should be of greater importance in sociological theory then it is up to now. The abundance of myths and rituals must be accounted for by individual inventions adopted by the community.⁸⁶ Referring to these statements Van Gennep repeated his criticism in 1913. “En outre, dans sa tendance personnelle bien connue à discerner avant tout et à mettre au premier plan l’élément collectif (social), M. Durkheim a négligé l’action, formatrice d’institutions et de croyances, de divers individus, sur laquelle j’avais attiré l’attention dans un volume que M. Durkheim a consciencieusement tenu pour nul et non avenu.”⁸⁷

c. The ontological status of society

Van Gennep’s perception of the “society” followed naturally from the just mentioned criticism. Durkheim was criticized because his theoretical explanations were based on “une sorte de métaphysique sociologique.”⁸⁸ Whenever Durkheim referred to “les besoins de la société”, Van Gennep considered this to be “une explication verbale fondée sur l’*animation* d’un terme abstrait.”⁸⁹ Durkheim dreams about “de reconnaître à la société une réalité naturelle.”⁹⁰ This reality was subjected to laws which can be studied. We come across the same criticism in 1920. According to Durkheim society is “une réalité *sui generis*.” Van Gennep terms this a postulate, “car n’est là une conception apriorique de l’auteur”⁹¹ and not the result of the study of primitive cultures.

d. The nature of science

One of Durkheim’s earlier works was entirely dedicated to method. In 1894 he presented his methodological demands in the

Revue Philosophique. These articles were combined and published as *Les règles de la méthode sociologique*.⁹² In this book rules were given for the perception of “faits sociaux,” for their explanation and for argumentation. Mauss and Fauconnet also wrote a methodological article.⁹³ The members of the *Année sociologique* group emphasized the importance of theorizing. A mere collection of facts they judged to be without value. This contrasts to the approach of Van Gennep. The latter’s first interest was his numismatical collection. Actually his later studies are also collections. Discussing such a collection of folklore stemming from the various parts of France Zumwalt remarks: “For van Gennep, the real importance of his work lay in the accurate collection and reporting of data. He willingly sacrificed the theoretical development and analysis in *Le Folklore du Dauphiné* in order to include more folklore selections.”⁹⁴ Durkheim would never have made a similar choice. Van Gennep however admitted that the sociological method of Durkheim and his school led to explications while the historical method just led to descriptions. Van Gennep preferred the biological way. Comparing in this way led to the possibility to classify in “natural” categories.⁹⁵

7. Conclusion

In the introductory section I discussed the possibility for assessing Van Gennep’s theories from various points of view. An assessment based on his *Les rites de passage* has a small foundation. The eulogy by Zumwalt and Belmont concerns mainly Van Gennep’s folkloristic studies. These studies were in fact mere collections of data.

The positive assessment of Van Gennep’s theories is based on some presuppositions concerning the influence of Durkheim and his *Année sociologique* group. It is a good possibility that this influence has been overestimated. Portraying the French academic world of Durkheim and his contemporaries, Clark shows a duality of the *patron* and his disciples. Strong ties exist between the *patron* and his disciples. They form a so-called *cluster*.⁹⁶ This *cluster* is a hierarchical group headed by the *patron*. Belonging to such a *cluster* is a prerequisite for a scientific career. Strong *clusters* are large, socially

integrated, intellectually united and widely diffused. According to Clark, Durkheim's *cluster* met these four criteria to a high degree.⁹⁷ If Clark is right, then the influence of Durkheim might have been enormous. However, in contrast to Clark's well defined *clusters*, Weisz describes "an amorphous and disorganised system of patronage and influence."⁹⁸ This fits in with the diffuse character of the *Année sociologique* group. Moreover, the institutional success of the newly arisen sociology was a conquest of limited scope.⁹⁹ In 1914 the share of the Durkheimians in the circuit of social sciences was still marginal. Since 1902 Durkheim held one of the two chairs for sociology. The second, in Bordeaux, was held by Richard who was at that moment in conflict with Durkheim. Mauss, Hubert, Hertz and Simiand held positions at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*. This position was an excellent one for research but not for exercising influence. Durkheim's methodological influence on the contrary, was a success. Other disciplines applicated sociological methods.¹⁰⁰ Besnard also questions the "commonly received image of the group of *Année* collaborators as forming a kind of sociological clan, homogeneous in its personnel and tightly knit around one man and one doctrine."¹⁰¹ The group of collaborators Durkheim recruited for his *Année sociologique* was rather divergent. Besnard points out that the reviews by Fauconnet, Richard and Simiand of Durkheim's books were critical. This proves that Durkheim "was not in any way a master gathering around himself zealous disciples burning to follow and honour him."¹⁰² According to Clark a journal was one of the main components of the *cluster*. In this case also Besnard debunks the image of the *Année sociologique* group as a *cluster*. "Apparently, then, it was in no one's mind, not even Durkheim's, to create a school by creating a journal."¹⁰³ Adducing evidence Besnard quotes a letter from Durkheim to Simiand. Durkheim wrote: "I hardly dared hope for the moral homogeneity which has come about between us and I meant to make of the *Année* only a collection of works, admission to which would require nothing beyond scientific honesty."¹⁰⁴

Consequently it must be concluded that a model of conspiracy cannot explain Van Gennep's exclusion from the academic world. Durkheim's influence was less extensive and the *Année sociologique* group was less uniform than presupposed by some.

Now let's see whether Needham's supposition that Van Gennep could have made a "distinctive contribution" to the tradition of Durkheim and his followers is correct or not.

Van Gennep had qualities as a commentator and as a critic. Since 1906, however, he had a very biting pen. Consequently, a serious discussion between Van Gennep and the members of the *Année sociologique* group was impossible. Apart from Van Gennep's vicious tone, their research-areas had little overlap and their research-methods were very divergent.

According to Van Gennep the main issue in the debate was the role of the individual in society. Society as it is can be explained with sociological models. Changes in this society, however, cannot be explained in the same way. So Van Gennep emphasized the methodological importance of the individual. In retrospect this is a rather naive attempt.

In Durkheim's work the individual and individualism is an important notion. However, there is a great difference between Van Gennep's use of these terms and Durkheim's. To gain some insight in this difference I will refer to definitions of Radcliffe-Brown and Dumont. An important distinction in regard to this discussion was made by Radcliffe-Brown. The latter distinguished between the *individual* and the *person*. "Every human being living in society is two things: he is an individual and also a person. As an individual he is a biological organism. Human beings as individuals are objects of study for physiologists and psychologists. The human being as a person is a complex of social relationships. As a person, the human is the object of study for the social anthropologists. We cannot study persons except in terms of social structure, nor can we study social structure except in terms of the persons who are the units of which it is composed."¹⁰⁵ Dumont in his research into the origin of Western ideology concerning the individual, makes a comparable distinction. In his glossary of basic terms used in his *Essays on individualism* (under the headword *Individual*), Dumont distinguishes between an *empirical* subject and a *moral* being: "(1) the *empirical* subject, indivisible sample of the human species, as encountered in all societies; (2) The independent, autonomous *moral* and, thus, essentially nonsocial being, as encountered first of all in our modern ideology of man and

society.’’¹⁰⁶ On the one hand there is the isolated atom, the *individual* (Radcliffe-Brown) or the *empirical* subject (Dumont), on the other hand the individual as a social construction, the *person* (Radcliffe-Brown) or the *moral* being (Dumont).

Van Gennep studied human beings as *individuals* (Radcliffe-Brown). The members of the *Année sociologique* group however studied them as *persons* (Radcliffe-Brown). To Durkheim the individual (not in Radcliffe-Brown’s terminology) and individualism were not important methodological instruments which could be used for explanations in sociology. The individual and individualism were, on the contrary, social products which had to be explained. About the individual in Western society, Durkheim remarked: ‘‘.... the individual becomes the object of a sort of religion. We have a cult of a personal dignity...’’¹⁰⁷

In a scheme:

individuals as atoms	individuals as social constructions	
<i>individuals</i>	<i>persons</i>	Radcliffe-Brown
<i>empirical</i> subject	<i>moral</i> beings	Dumont
Van Gennep’s individual	Durkheim’s individual	

Emphasizing the methodological importance of the individual for the explanation of social change, Van Gennep did not *analyze* Western society. On the contrary, he became a *spokesman* of the prevailing modern Western ideology. This ideology was expressed already by Adam Smith in his *The Wealth of Nations*. According to Smith the individual is the driving force of economical development.¹⁰⁸ Novack also points at the relation between Western mercantile capitalism and the metaphysics of individualism.¹⁰⁹ From this point of view Van Gennep is not a scientist researching societies. He is on the contrary an object of research for a science of ideas, a science studying Western individualistic ideology.

Consequently, in the debate about the relation between the individual and society we meet on the one hand Durkheim and his *Année sociologique* group and on the other hand (amongst others) Van Gennep. The first studied human beings as *persons* (in Radcliffe-Brown's terminology), as social constructions. The *person* as a *moral* being (in Dumont's terminology) was regarded as the product of modern Western society. Van Gennep studied human beings as *individuals* (in Radcliffe-Brown's terminology) or as *empirical* subjects (in Dumont's terminology). Durkheim, the members of the *Année sociologique* group, Dumont and Novack tried to transcend Western ideological paradigm and to make this paradigm an object of study. Van Gennep argued on the contrary from within this paradigm. A discussion between representatives of such diverging basic assumptions is beforehand out of the question. So it is not "striking" that Van Gennep was ignored by Durkheim and his colleagues. The paradigm of which the first was a spokesman and representative was transcended and made into an object of research in the paradigm of the latter.

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¹ Lukes, 1973, p. 524, n. 35.

² idem.

³ Evans-Pritchard, 1960, p. 17.

⁴ Needham, 1967, p. xi.

⁵ Mauss, 1903, p. 168, cf. Isambert, 1983, p. 152.

⁶ Van Gennep's father was not Dutch, cf. Kimball, p. 113; nor was Van Gennep himself a Belgian anthropologist, cf. Becker, 1954, p. 113, n. 7.

⁷ Belmont, 1979, p. 20; Zumwalt, 1988, p. 17-20.

⁸ Belmont, 1979, p. 17.

⁹ Belmont, 1979, p. 70-103; Zumwalt, 1988, p. 34-49.

¹⁰ Van Gennep, 1904, p. 1.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 11, 15, 27, 53, 71, 76, 241, n. 5, 245, 248 n. 2, 317, 328, 329.

¹² Indeed not from 1908, cf. Zumwalt, 1988, p. 119.

¹³ Van Gennep, 1904, p. 25, 43-46, 52, 62, 72-75, 82, 98, 125, 240-241, 250; 1906, p. lvi.

¹⁴ Van Gennep, 1960, p. 191.

¹⁵ Zumwalt, 1988, p. 27.

¹⁶ Van Gennep, 1964, p. 12.

¹⁷ Kimball, 1968, p. 113.

¹⁸ Belmont, 1979, p. 58.

- ¹⁹ idem.
- ²⁰ Kimball, 1960, p. vii.
- ²¹ ibid., p. x, xi.
- ²² cf. Kuper, 1973, p. 68: "the neglected master"; Evans-Pritchard, 1965, p. 67: "Durkheim and his colleagues excluded and ignored him"; idem, 1981, p. 188 "[he] never received high academic recognition."
- ²³ Kimball, 1960, p. xvii.
- ²⁴ ibid., p. xvi.
- ²⁵ ibid., p. x.
- ²⁶ Tozzer, 1925, p. 88.
- ²⁷ Starr, 1910, p. 707-708.
- ²⁸ Junod, 1912, p. 74-92.
- ²⁹ d'Alviella, 1914, p. 315b, 317b f.
- ³⁰ Parsons, 1916, p. 41.
- ³¹ Tozzer, 1925, p. 86 ff.
- ³² Benedict, 1934, p. 25, 278.
- ³³ Chapple and Coon, 1942, p. 458, cf. Titiev, p. 431, 432.
- ³⁴ cf. Snoek, 1987, p. 76.
- ³⁵ Norbeck, 1961, p. 139 ff.
- ³⁶ Van Baal, 1985, p. 130.
- ³⁷ Chapple and Coon, 1942, p. vii, cf. Bidney, 1953, p. 363, 408.
- ³⁸ e.g. Arensberg and Kimball, 1940, p. xi, referring to Tozzer, Chapple and Coon.
- ³⁹ Needham, 1967, p. xii.
- ⁴⁰ Kuper, 1973, p. 206.
- ⁴¹ ibid., p. 175.
- ⁴² Needham, 1963, p. ix.
- ⁴³ Mauss, M., *The Gift*, translated by Ian Cunnison with an introduction by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, London, 1954.
- ⁴⁴ Hertz, R., *Death and the Right Hand*, translated by R. and C. Needham with an introduction by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, London, 1960.
- ⁴⁵ Durkheim, É., and M. Mauss, *Primitive Classifications*, translated and introduced by R. Needham.
- ⁴⁶ Hubert, H., and M. Mauss, *The Sacrifice*, translated by W. D. Halls and introduced by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, London, 1964.
- ⁴⁷ Van Gennep, A., *The Semi-scholars*, translated and introduced by R. Needham, London, 1967.
- ⁴⁸ e.g. Leach, 1972, p. 114 f.; 1976, p. 77 ff.
- ⁴⁹ Zumwalt, 1988, p. 25; Morris, 1987, p. 248.
- ⁵⁰ Turner, 1969, p. 166, cf. also Turner, 1964 passim and 1969, p. 14, 94.
- ⁵¹ Morris, 1987, p. 248.
- ⁵² Belmont, 1979, p. 66, cf. p. 124.
- ⁵³ Hubert, H., et M. Mauss, "Études sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice", in: *Année sociologique*, 2 (1899), p. 29-138.
- ⁵⁴ Hertz, R., "Contributions à une étude sur la représentation collective de la mort", in: *Année sociologique*, 10 (1907), p. 48-137.
- ⁵⁵ Mauss, 1910, p. 201.
- ⁵⁶ ibid., p. 202.
- ⁵⁷ Zumwalt, 1988, p. 113 ff.
- ⁵⁸ Van Gennep, 1964, p. 1.
- ⁵⁹ Zumwalt, 1982, p. 299.

- ⁶⁰ idem.
- ⁶¹ idem.
- ⁶² Belmont, 1979, p. 2.
- ⁶³ idem.
- ⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 17.
- ⁶⁵ Zumwalt, 1988, p. 92.
- ⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 98.
- ⁶⁷ Van Gennep, 1904, p. 306.
- ⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 314.
- ⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 321.
- ⁷⁰ Van Gennep, 1904, p. 109, n. 1 and 1905, p. 440.
- ⁷¹ Van Gennep, 1906, p. xxxiii ff.
- ⁷² *ibid.*, 1906, p. xxxv.
- ⁷³ *ibid.*, p. xxvi.
- ⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 1913, p. 389.
- ⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 90.
- ⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 1920, p. 40.
- ⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 43.
- ⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 45.
- ⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 49.
- ⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 52.
- ⁸¹ *ibid.*, 1913, p. 391.
- ⁸² *ibid.*, 1904, p. 8.
- ⁸³ *ibid.*, 1906, p. xxxv.
- ⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. xxxv-xliv.
- ⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. xliii.
- ⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. xciii ff.
- ⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 1913, p. 391.
- ⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 1906, p. xxiv.
- ⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. xxv.
- ⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 1913, p. 391.
- ⁹¹ *ibid.*, 1920, p. 41.
- ⁹² Durkheim, É., *Les règles de la méthode sociologique*, Paris, 1895, 2nd, ed. 1901.
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- ⁹⁴ Zumwalt, 1988, p. 6-7.
- ⁹⁵ Van Gennep, 1908, p. 74.
- ⁹⁶ Clark, 1973, p. 66-92.
- ⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 68, 98.
- ⁹⁸ Weisz, 1983, p. 116.
- ⁹⁹ Karady, 1983, p. 75.
- ¹⁰⁰ e.g. the *Annales* school of social history, cf. Hughes, 1968, p. 19 ff.; cf. Clark, 1973, p. 194.
- ¹⁰¹ Besnard, 1983, p. 11.
- ¹⁰² *ibid.*, p. 17.
- ¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 18.
- ¹⁰⁴ idem.
- ¹⁰⁵ Radcliffe-Brown, 1952, p. 193-194.
- ¹⁰⁶ Dumont, 1986, p. 279; cf. Dumont, 1977, p. 8.
- ¹⁰⁷ in: Lukes, 1973, p. 156, cf. *ibid.*, p. 339-344; cf. Mauss, 1950, p. 331-362.
- ¹⁰⁸ see: Dumont, 1977, p. 82-108.
- ¹⁰⁹ Novack, 1969, p. 52-57; cf. also Morris, 1991, p. 45-46.

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GEOGRAPHY AND MENTALITY
SOME ASPECTS OF MAX WEBER'S
PROTESTANTISM THESIS*

KARL-LUDWIG AY

Summary

In his essays on the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism Max Weber proceeds from the observation that in Germany there is a clearly recognizable difference between the economic behaviour of Catholics and Protestants. As one of the reasons for this difference, the essays reveal—as a guiding principle for people's conduct of life—the principle of worldly asceticism inherent in Protestantism. This, Weber said, especially contributed to the formation of modern bourgeois capitalism in the occidental world. This thesis was mainly developed on the evidence of phenomena which Weber observed in Western Europe and North America and which he himself related to Calvinism. The problem now is that the Germany of Weber's time, as a leading industrial state, participated in modern western capitalism without Calvinism playing for the German Protestants a role which would have been in any way comparable to its role in the more western countries.

Detailed examination of governmental, economic, and social conditions in the history of the denominationalisation of some German territories and the comparison with the living conditions of Protestants in Western Europe and America leads to the conclusion that the later development of bourgeois economy and what I would like to call "Word Culture" (cf. p. 176f.) depended on the following factors: on with what methods and with what severity the rulers of the Reformation Era succeeded in imposing their own personal choice of faith upon their subjects or how far they allowed things to take their course without interference; then on whether they in this way curtailed, permitted or even supported the development of that capitalist and bourgeois economic spirit and "Word Culture" which had its roots as far back as the pre-Reformation era and which had then been boosted by Calvinism.

Both individual belief and the rulers' power over this belief influenced equally vigorously and lastingly the mentality of all people concerned. Even more generalized: depending on whether and to what extent the religious and intellectual culture of a society are subjected to state oppression and coercive formation over a long period of time, the intellectual culture and economic attitude and potential of this society will develop. Life-style, economic ethic and cultural profile of many later generations depend on this.

The Geographical Sphere of Max Weber's Protestantism Thesis

Historical maps of Germany show a most colourful picture. This diversity is a structural feature of Germany.¹ Consequently a

regional historical and comparative working method is best suited for research into topics of Central European political, legal, and above all, social history. In Germany and other Western countries this method derives from the highly developed field of regional history ('Landesgeschichte'), with its constant reference to distinguished geographical areas. Because its topic is the historical development of small or even miniscule individual regions and their comparison, it is this branch of historical sciences which can best provide particularly detailed insight. For the analysis of people's concrete living conditions this is certainly an advantage, although it may, on the other hand, be regarded as a disadvantage in comparison with subjects—e.g. sociology—with universal claim of validity.

In 1901 Martin Offenbacher, a pupil of Max Weber, published his dissertation with the title "Konfession und soziale Schichtung".² According to him, in Germany around 1900, the adherents of the Protestant denominations were significantly over-represented, and the Catholics clearly under-represented, in those professional fields of occupation which are relevant to modern capitalist industrial culture—from factory work to academics and businessmen. There have been reports about the greater affluence and income of the Protestants in Germany—albeit without statistical evidence—*mutatis mutandis* since the 18th century.³ Offenbacher's work is mainly based on the church statistics of the Grand Duchy of Baden, where people of different religious denominations lived side by side and Calvinist traditions played a great role within Protestantism.⁴

Based on Offenbacher's results, Max Weber, in his study of the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, examines certain religious and social human types. He concludes that according to this Protestantism implies a special ethos of acquiring and a religious duty "to gain" whose reason lies not in particular Lutheran professional ethics but rather in a different religiously based phenomenon—"ascetic Protestantism" ("asketischer Protestantismus"), or in more general terms "worldly asceticism" ("innerweltliche Askese"). For Weber this "worldly asceticism" is the pivotal point of Protestant ethics for the spirit of Protestant capitalism, which—he says—is characterised by deeply correct and

predictable economic behaviour and the religious duty of the untiring fulfilment of professional obligation. For him, this behaviour forms the prerequisite for the specific occidental nature of economic rationality and thus of modern industrial capitalism.⁵

Weber's thesis aroused a broad and continuing discussion among historians, economists, sociologists, and theologians. The literature on the topic has long since breached all limits, both in content and pure bulk.⁶ It is the discovery of "worldly ascetism" and its economic and cultural effects which has come closest to general acceptance. But apart from this, doubts about the empirical conclusiveness of Weber's initial material and his conclusions prevail at least among historians.⁷ If one follows Paul Münch's analysis of historical literature about Weber's thesis on Protestantism, one will already find all the important religious and historico-cultural constituents which Weber attributed to the Reformation and to Calvinism, in pre-Reformation authors of the Renaissance and Humanism and especially in the economic behaviour of the Italian, above all Florentine, civic burghers.

Even if Münch's argument were true, the historical reasons offered by Weber for relating a "style of life that promotes capitalism" to Protestantism⁸ retain their force. Because with the effect of historical occurrences, their originality does not matter as much as their intensity and their dissemination. In Weber's argumentation, the "worldly asceticism" of "ascetic Protestantism" plays a central role. Based on Dutch, English and American phenomena and literary sources all of which can be related to reformed Calvinistic Protestantism, Weber links this asceticism with John Calvin's doctrine of predestination. This however is a world away from Martin Luther's doctrine of the Christian believer gaining eternal salvation through true faith, which is a gift from God to the individual Christian. Weber's method of explanation therefore had the consequence that those of its sociological aspects which related to Calvinism could only be relevant to those parts of Protestant Germany in which Zwinglianism or Calvinism had once played or still play a role. But Weber also disregarded German Calvinism to a large degree and concentrated on West European-American Calvinism, and therefore he obviously does not explain his German findings at all.⁹ This becomes even clearer if one

remembers that in German Lutheranism, predominantly composed of state churches, only the ascetic Pietism of the 17th and 18th centuries shows characteristics of a religious self-organisation separate from the state.

Accordingly, in Lutheran Germany with its state churches, the most important link in Weber's theory between Protestant ethic and the capitalist spirit is largely missing—at least in the Reformation era: namely "ascetic Protestantism", with its experience of "worldly asceticism". Thus, combining Weber's approach and the methods of regional history, we will further investigate the relationship between the confession of the population of a certain area and their cultural and economic individuality. The further argumentation in this paper depends on the accuracy of two assumptions:

1. Weber emphasizes that the development of 'worldly asceticism' from Calvinistic Protestantism is only one of many prerequisites for the development of modern capitalism. This is not an argumentational hedge, but a statement of substance. Weber is conscious that there can also be 'worldly asceticism' without Calvinism—nor will it necessarily be produced by Calvinism—and that there are further and older conditions for the development of the capitalist spirit—which he neglected, however, in his analysis, isolating only one phenomenon.¹⁰
2. The existence and expansion of dense industrial structures require the emergence and development of capitalist methods of economy focussed on steady calculable acquisition, and the corresponding mentality of the population. From these features may be inferred the existence of what Weber calls "the spirit of capitalism" ('Geist of des Kapitalismus').

As, for Weber, there is also the possibility of an efficient economy based on capitalist principles, yet without Protestantism or Protestant ethics, neither Japan's economic boom nor Central Europe's economic and denominational geography can be cited as falsifications of his thesis. For the same reason it is not even important that Weber should pose his question in terms of Germany and Lutheranism and answer in terms of Central Europe and Calvinism. For all theologians of the Reformation based their ideas on the heritage of the Roman Church, on the Renaissance and

Humanism—Zwingli and Calvin moreover on Luther. That is why it is possible for the Dutch, English or American religious phenomena to have the same sources as the Reformation in its country of origin—namely Germany—without them here being too obvious anymore.

That investigation, however, would be a matter for specialist theologians. But at least one aspect is also accessible to the historian: that is to say, on the one hand, whether there are apart from shared denomination yet more elements which the West European and American Calvinists have in common regarding their religious conduct of life and, on the other hand, whether the Protestants in Germany differ from them with regard to such common features. Our survey is to deal with three questions:

- I., whether the comparison of denominational geography and economic geography allows conclusions to be drawn from one to the other,
- II., whether and to what extent individuals in the period of the Reformation were able to choose their own faith or rather, whether they were able to assert and defend it against their authorities ('Obrigkeit'), and
- III., whether the way the authorities sought to influence this choice generated certain mental effects beyond the question of faith.

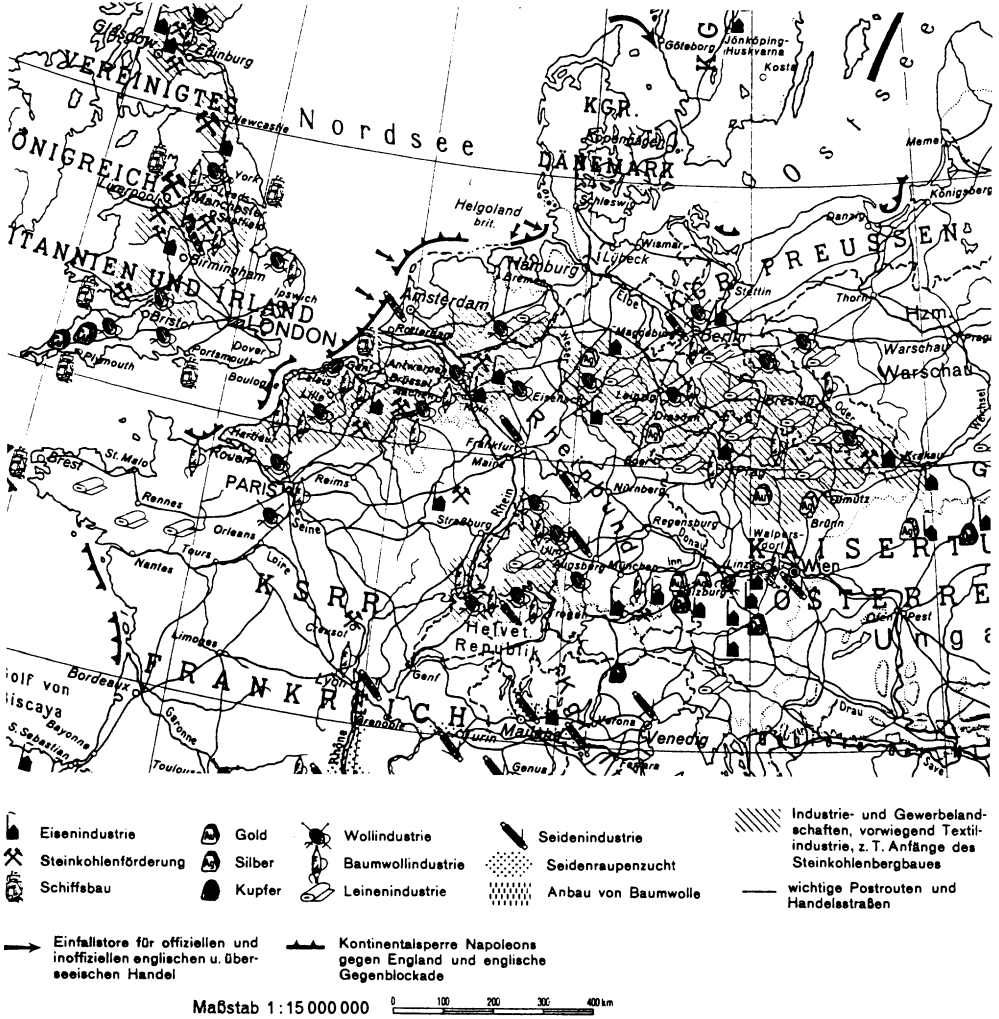
I. Denominational and Economic Geography

To a reader whose study of Weber's writings on Protestantism is guided by a geographical or regional historical approach, it is apparent that Weber operates with material from various regions: he isolates the phenomenon in Baden with its Calvinistic traditions and generalizes it for the rest of Germany, where Lutheranism is customary and prevails. But his own sociological analysis and his eventual conclusion—that is to say the Protestantism Thesis—is based on West European and American material, which is not to be related to Luther's Reformation but to that of the Frenchman Calvin.¹¹ At first sight there is no real reason for this change in the sphere of investigation—from Baden in Germany to Western Europe and America. For Imperial Germany was part of the industrial capitalist world and its economy was most highly

developed in the Protestant areas, while Catholic non-Prussian Germany—i.e. South Germany and above all Bavaria—was in character rural and small-town. Accordingly denominational and economic structures in Germany corresponded strikingly *prima vista*, if Protestantism and “style of life that promotes capitalism”, i.e. prospering economy, are seen to be correlated to each other.

Yet a more precise analysis of the conditions of the German Confederation (1815-1866) as regards its Old European traditions and its regional structure will immediately put in perspective a hasty association of Protestantism and economic structure: In Werner Conze’s *Economic Map of Europe for 1812*¹² for example, we find that there extends—from Cracow and Upper Silesia in the South East to both sides of the Sudeten and Erzgebirge, and then across the German low mountain range to the river Weser in the North West—a some 500 miles long and 120 miles wide area which is described in the map’s legend as “industrial and trade area predominantly textile industry, partly beginnings of coal mining”. It is the largest continuous area of this kind in Europa and covers wide areas with partly German, Czech or Polish speaking populations, among them North Bohemia and Silesia, which were denominationally mixed or predominantly Catholic and which had originally—before Frederick the Great’s Silesian Wars—belonged to Catholic Austria. In terms of area, the Catholic part of this economic area predominates over the Saxon-Thuringian Protestant part. This picture of the industrial weight of Catholic areas is confirmed if the region which comes next in size is considered: that ancient central trade region which extends from Rouen along the Northern French coast over Belgium, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne and over the Rhine, the River Ruhr and the River Wupper deep into Germany. Throughout this area, which omits the central regions of the Netherlands from around the Zuidersee to the River Ems, Catholicism also predominated even if there were Protestant islands in the German parts of this area. So, around 1800 in Europe there appears—if we disregard the British industrial areas—to be only one predominantly Protestant-populated trade region: the area along the Upper Rhine, whose centre covers the Southern Vosges, the Burgundian Gap, Northern Switzerland and the Neckar region between Lake Constance and the Rhine, including the ancient Duchy of Württemberg.

EUROPÄISCHE WIRTSCHAFTSKARTE 1812 (im Zeitalter Napoleons)



Extract from Werner Conze's Map of the European Economy in 1812 (see note 12)

It is only from the point of view of "Little Germany" of the year 1900, which disregards the North French and Belgian manufacturing district as well as the Austrian part of the early modern trade areas, that the Lutheran area of the kingdoms of Saxony and Württemberg together with mainly Prussian and Lutheran Silesia dominates. But if we look over the border of the Reich, we find at most a very loose correlation between Lutheranism and the spatial distribution of Central Europe's trade and industrial regions.

So the German material only appears self-evident if it is isolated from the adjacent countries: only then does it allow the conclusion that the cultural and economic patterns of conduct of Catholic and Protestant—in Germany mainly Lutheran—populations are characteristically different from each other. It is exactly from this observation that Weber starts out. Yet on the basis of the German material he was unable to generalize it.

*II. Autochthonous and Governmentally Enforced 'Konfessionalisierung'*¹³

So let us try and find another way to build a bridge between Weber's findings and the religious circumstances in Germany.

If we know what the Western Calvinists have in common we can examine if and where the same features are to be found in Germany. So who does Weber look for? Let us follow his enumeration: "In history there have been four principal forms of ascetic Protestantism (in the sense of word here used): (1) Calvinism in the form which it assumed in the main area of its influence in Western Europe, especially in the seventeenth century; (2) Pietism; (3) Methodism; (4) the sects growing out of the Baptist movement."¹⁴ It is quite obvious from Weber's list that only the Pietists were to be found in great numbers and distribution in Germany around 1900. Yet in the 16th and early 17th century Calvinism had also spread through Germany alongside Lutheranism: Since the middle of the century of the Reformation a remarkable number of powerful, wealthy and educated people surged to join the reformist Zwinglians and Calvinists.

This latter development, which was reversed in the last few decades before the Thirty Years' War, began in the 1540's in Bremen and in East Frisia: Countess Anna of East Frisia was one

of the first rulers in the Holy Roman Empire who encouraged a Zwinglian and Protestant Reformation rather than a Lutheran one. Its followers spread under her protection and the protection of the aristocracy, with foreign religious refugees of reformed denomination setting the tone in Emden, the seat of the Countess's court.¹⁵ Later—in the 1570's—another Frisian ruler, now from his seat in the more easterly town of Aurich, propagated a very rigid Lutheranism. While he was successful with it in the East and South of his territory, Calvinism asserted itself in the Western part and along the coast: the natural agrarian conditions of the marshland had encouraged the development of large farms. Their owners clung to their Calvinist faith whereas the smaller farmers on the more barren East Frisian Geestland now embraced Lutheranism.¹⁶ So even at that early stage we see the tendency emerge that among Protestants Calvinism appealed to the leading groups rather than to the ordinary people. This tendency rapidly prevailed. When the "second Reformation" spread over the Empire, its Calvinist form, unlike that of orthodox Lutheranism, not only relied on the support of the princes and the aristocracy, but also and above all on the wealthy and educated citizens in the towns and at the head of the administrations.¹⁷

Admittedly the choice of faith of these adherents of Calvinism had already been prepared in Lutheranism. It is therefore to be presumed that even before the open decision for Calvin's Reformation a certain mentality and way of living were able to develop, which then led people to Calvin. If we assume this, the role of Calvinism with regard to economic ethics and rational bourgeois ways of living is reduced—at least in Germany—to the strengthening of tendencies which were already inherent in Lutheranism, the middle-age town and early modern bureaucracy.

In a number of territories of Protestant Germany right into Saxony and Brandenburg this Calvinism of the prosperous and educated commoners joined forces with the rulers and in some territories—for example the Palatinate, Upper Palatinate or Hesse-Cassel—a royal absolutism based on Calvinism was established, which, using diverse methods of compulsion, attempted to force the denomination of the leading strata upon the ordinary people, most of whom were strongly attached to Lutheranism.¹⁸ This followed a

principle which, since the twenties of the century of the Reformation, a growing number of German princes (“Landesfürsten”) had practised and which, from the Augsburg Religious Peace Treaty of 1555, was in force in the Empire in general: *cuius regio, eius religio*. The rulers determined the religious denomination of their subjects. Only the ruler of a country and no-one else was entitled to the free decision whether to embrace this or that faith.¹⁹

Admittedly this clause of *cuius regio* did not exist at the beginning of the history of the Reformation. Originally the faith of the people would be decided, for the most part, in a different fashion. Observing the area of North-West Germany Christina Reinhard formulated it in this way: the formal introduction of the Reformation by the authorities often only meant “that a well-developed *de facto* embracing of Protestantism was made manifest and obtained official legitimacy. As a rule, years or even decades of a denominational state of suspense preceded, during which a silently tolerated or negligently opposed Protestant sermon, Catholic mass and Lutheran communion existed closely together.”²⁰ You could add that initially the Reformation seized more or less great parts of the society and that this juxtaposition was to be found almost all over the Empire before the rulers made their mark on the religion of their subjects in the Reformation period.²¹

Let us now look at the rulers’ interference with their subjects’ religion, our interest lying more in the means, the intensity and the success, rather than in the denominational tendency. Interference usually followed one of those patterns:

1. The Reformation penetrated into an area
 - a. not at all, or
 - b. only as a result of a decision of the authorities.
2. After the Reformation had gained a foothold among the people of an area, the authorities decided
 - a. not to have clear religious politics, or
 - b. they promoted the Reformation actively, or
 - c. they decisively opposed it.
3. Calvinism asserted itself against the Lutheran movement of the Reformation
 - a. either without participation of the authorities or
 - b. by the rulers’ decision.

The first case—that the Reformation did not penetrate into the country at all or, if it did, only through the ruler's decision—may be neglected because it never happened. The princes' dealings with Calvinism are included in the second case (2b). We frequently find that the authorities could not decide on any clear policy with respect to the Reformation and this attitude is apparent, above all, in the Church Lands ('Geistliche Fürstentümer'), that is to say the states under the rule of abbots, bishops, and archbishops. In each individual case it should also be noted whether Baptist Movements were able to be established in the area in question. Apart from East Frisia and along the Lower Rhine, they were violently suppressed or ousted by the rulers or the authorities almost everywhere in the Empire.

It goes without saying that only a few examples of the ruler's interference with the religious development of a territory in the period of the Reformation can be dealt with here. We shall exclude the imperial free cities, whose internal conditions, due to internal self-organisation by local authorities, are (from the religious aspect, which is of interest here) best compared with circumstances in the Netherlands; and we shall exclude the two greatest German territories: Brandenburg-Prussia and Austria with Bohemia. As a result of their size and multiformity each one deserves a study of its own.²² We shall limit ourselves to the Church Land of the Archbishop of Salzburg, the Electorate of Saxony, the Duchy of Bavaria and the Duchy of the Upper Palatinate. Admittedly all these territories lay in the South and in the middle of the Empire, and none of them in the West or North, and that must be born in mind. The occasional reference to the Palatinate and East Frisia cannot fully compensate for this fact. Each of them portrays an exception in its own way—but then the Holy Roman Empire never consisted of anything but exceptions.

The Church Land of the Archbishop of Salzburg

In the principality of Salzburg²³ 1520 is the first date at which we find records of parish priests preaching the Gospel after the example set in Wittenberg. Archbishop Matthäus Lang, a politically very important ruler, the man Luther had to thank for his

appearance at the Imperial Diet of Worms in 1521, opposed the Reformation, even had a preacher beheaded in 1528 and those Protestant preachers known to him thrown into prison or exiled, yet he never pursued any systematic policy for the investigation and suppression of the Reformation. So it was possible for Johann Staupitz, Luther's teacher in Erfurt, who was made Abbot of Saint Peter in Salzburg in 1522 by Lang, to accept the fact that some of his monks went to Wittenberg, and to keep up his correspondence with Luther until his death in 1524. Luther's doctrine spread as far as the aldermen of the archbishop's capital and into the most remote mountain valleys. One of Lang's successors, Wolfdietrich von Raitenau, the most ruthless of all rulers of Salzburg, who had one third of his capital torn down in order to make room for his palace and the new cathedral,²⁴ had taken as his consort 'the beautiful Salome Alt', the daughter of a Protestant burgher of Salzburg. Around 1590 Wolfdietrich even announced religious tolerance.

Wolfdietrich's successor, however, retracted this edict of tolerance; soon there were no longer any pastors for the Protestants in the country. Yet although they were under the most severe pressure of persecution from around 1611, thousands of Lutherans secretly held to their faith. So did their descendants until their expulsion in 1730/31. Certain conventicles among the miners of Dürnberg are reported to have read Luther's translation of the Bible and his catechism together and orally passed on his doctrine. Before the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm I allowed them to settle in East Prussia, he first had a delegation of them examined—their community not having seen an ordained pastor for over 100 years—by the Lutheran Consistory in Berlin. The delegation passed the 'exam of faith' brilliantly: the people of Salzburg were found to be totally orthodox. Later the commercial and acquisitional ability they revealed in East Prussia and elsewhere was universally recognized, as was the inner solidarity of the group.

The Electorate and the Duchy of Saxony

Things are totally different in our next—and most important—case study, Saxony,²⁵ the home and base of Lutheranism. First we will look at the economic development and compare maps showing the economic situation in 1500²⁶ and 1812 respectively.²⁷

On the first map—between the mining town of Freiberg in the Saxon Erzgebirge and Leipzig, famous city of trade fairs—we find a trade district dominated by linen weaving with Chemnitz and Rochlitz as its centres; there was iron processing and wool weaving in and around Zwickau and silver and zinc mining at four places in the Erzgebirge. According to this map, around 1500 other trade areas of the Empire clearly carried greater economic weight. For linen weaving for instance there was Swabia between the rivers Lech and Iller and the Westphalian area around Münster and Osnabrück, and for iron processing there was the Sauerland between Cologne and Dortmund, and, above all, the Upper Palatinate east of Nuremberg. However, the mountainous southern area of Saxony along the ridge of the Erzgebirge had been in a state of rapid economic upturn since the last third of the 15th century after the discovery of rich mineral resources—and as a natural result of this upturn it was in the process of social modification towards a capitalist urban trade economy. The second map presents Saxony as the central industrial and trade area of Germany around 1800, while showing stagnation along the Rhine and the Ruhr; the Upper Palatinate industrial district has totally disappeared.

Back to the Reformation in Saxony. Its rapid expansion cannot be explained without reference to the dynamic economic and social development based on mining. For thanks to this new source of wealth, which provided the economy of the country with a further basis in addition to the traditional textile trade and agriculture, a new cluster of towns sprang up, where urban, bourgeois society and culture rapidly developed.

It was in the Saxon towns and among the burghers below the patrician families that Luther's Reformation first gained hold after the announcement of the 95 Theses in 1517, and from where it had spread over the whole of Saxony by 1525, while the agrarian country dwellers and the aristocracy treated it rather cautiously. But up to the Peasants' War of 1525 the rulers—the Albertine Elector Frederick the Wise, who resided in Torgau and Wittenberg, and the Ernestine Duke George with his seat in Dresden—let the change in ecclesiastical matters simply run its course rather than actively promote or hinder it.

The Albertine Frederick the Wise took Luther under his wing both before and after the Imperial Diet of Worms in 1521, but the spreading of Luther's doctrines actually happened—though certainly not against the Elector's will—without his support. Frederick died in 1525, the year of the Peasants' War. The shock of this revolutionary revolt, which was closely connected with the spread of the Reformation but which hardly touched Saxony directly, or—for that matter—Bavaria, led to the first clarification of the denominational situation. Frederick's brother and heir, the Elector John, openly joined the Reformation and gave it some form of organisation. It cannot be said that he repressed the remaining adherents of the Old Church with particular severity, although he did abolish a great part of the monasteries—but then most of the monks or nuns had previously turned to the new doctrine and had left their monasteries or convents.

It was different in Ernestine Saxony, where the ruler, Duke George, resolutely and violently fought against the Reformation after the Peasants' War, until his country had superficially been led back to the Old Church. However, when his brother and heir Henry established the Reformation in 1539 in a voluntary decision, his duchy was soon as firmly Protestant as the Electorate of Saxony, admittedly without Catholicism having totally disappeared from certain areas. People who adhered to the Old Faith were generally left in peace.²⁸

It may safely be concluded that the introduction and accomplishment of the Reformation in Saxony was a course of events in which the rulers played a great part, admittedly rather more in the sense that they followed the developments and then legalized the social achievements the people of their country had previously accomplished. A confrontation of ruling power and inner social dynamics, involving religious coercion and police informers and so forth was not necessary. Rather, the Saxon princes systematically promoted the development of intellectual potential in their country. Eventually Saxony became a German centre of a type of intellectual culture which was characterized by the laymen's free access to the Word of God and the free use of the word in speech and writing. In the following I would like to call it "Word Culture". Severe struggles about religion did not occur before the end of the 16th

century, when also in Saxony groups of commoners from the bureaucracy and from among the civic merchants attempted to push the rulers along the path of the Calvinist “second Reformation”: They were defeated by the resistance of the ordinary people in town and country, who remained Lutheran. With this exception and with the exception of the belligerent enemy of the Reformation, George, we might be justified in assuming in most of the Saxon princes, in spite of all resolution, traces of that denominational indifference which later, around 1695, enabled the Elector August to accept the conversion to the Old Church as a prerequisite for obtaining the Polish crown. They all seem to have had higher political aims than the enforcement of their own personal belief upon their subjects. How else would it have been possible for the Lutheran Duke and Elector Moritz four times—between 1540 and 1553—to impose the great Humanist Georg Agricola as mayor upon the city of Chemnitz—against the explicit will of the Lutheran city council:²⁹ Agricola, the renowned scientist and founder of scientific mineralogy and metallurgy, remained true to the Old Faith for all his life.

The Duchy of Bavaria

Now to the situation in the Duchy of Bavaria, a complete contrast to the situation found in Saxony.³⁰ This country, which, except for the salt from Reichenhall, had no mineral resources at all to exploit and whose economy was based on agriculture, had once belonged, like the Rhineland, to the Roman Empire and from the start of the Frankish Kingdom in the 6th century until the beginning of the Reformation had been one of the main areas of German intellectual development in literature and learning.³¹

The course of French and Italian literary and scholarly culture, or the example of Georg Agricola and—even more prominently—Erasmus of Rotterdam, is sufficient proof that the choice in favour of the Old Church and the Catholic belief did not hinder the intellectual development of people and cultural regions: The only difference that went with the affiliation to the Old Church was the lack of that kind of support which the specifically Protestant dedication to the Word brought into the Word Culture of, say,

Württemberg and Saxony. However, the development of this Word Culture demanded that the individual may err in his thought, speech and writing with impunity: that he was consequently not subject to any commitment to dogmas enforced by the authorities. This enforced commitment, however, was the essence of the policy against the spread of Protestantism, a policy which the rulers of Bavaria pursued over a period of around 125 years with relentless severity and loyalty to their convictions. Here are two examples: While in Saxony the Catholic Georg Agricola, on the express wishes of his Protestant ruler, kept his office and rank, the works of the great Bavarian historian Johannes Aventinus could not be printed in his own country in his lifetime: in 1528 he was imprisoned 'ob evangelium'; he spent the last years of his life in exile.³² Similar was the fate of Philipp Apian, professor in Ingolstadt and one of the founders of scientific cartography, who Bavaria had to thank for the first exact map of the country. With his conversion to the new doctrine he had to leave Bavaria in 1568 and he went to Tübingen in Lutheran Württemberg.³³

In spite of their resolute opposition the Bavarian rulers could not stop the infiltration and rapid spread of the Reformation. In the 1520s and 1530s a large section of the population of the towns and the villages were Protestant, and in the fifties and sixties a large proportion of the aristocracy too. With, among other things, the help of the Jesuit order, which they invited to the country, the dukes fought increasingly and systematically for the protection of their faith and for the religious unity of their country. The expulsion of the Protestants, with no consideration for the benefit for or damage to the country, was one of the principal methods of this religious policy. Further methods were: severe literary censorship, which included the monitoring of printing, trading and the private possession of books,³⁴ and an ubiquitous system of informers to unearth the religious attitudes of all individuals, to keep close watch over their public and private conversations and correspondence and to prevent the possession of forbidden books and pamphlets. Along with this went the systematic surveillance of schools, and with the help of the schools the hold on the parents of the pupils was gained. The methods of control may be illustrated by one example: after confession, the believers received a so-called "Beichtzettel" from

their vicar as a form of receipt. Every Monday and after the main holidays, the teachers collected these certificates. Anyone who did not have one was suspected of having Protestant parents. The teachers were obliged to forward these certificates together with any further relevant information to the local vicar. If a teacher refrained from doing so, suspicion would be directed against him. But because a large number of teachers could not, in the end, be controlled effectively, the Duke and Elector Maximilian, Bavaria's most eminent ruler, in 1606 put an end to the bulk of the schools in the country without further ado; he would rather rule over illiterates than over Protestants.³⁵ Under his rule Protestantism finally disappeared from Bavaria.

The Upper Palatinate

Our last example is the Upper Palatinate,³⁶ a territory in the North of Bavaria, which as a result of repeated partitions of the country in the course of the 13th and 14th centuries was separated from the Duchy of Bavaria due to the laws of succession and was made a collateral country to the Rhenish Palatinate,^{36a} also known as the Lower Palatinate.

Luther's doctrine also spread rapidly both in the Rhenish Palatinate and in the Upper Palatinate. The Elector Ludwig V, who ruled until 1544, let the spread of the new doctrine run its course, from time to time he even had Protestant preachers in court, yet personally he remained true to the Old Faith. His successor, the Elector Frederick II, was the first openly to declare himself a follower of Luther. Even this prince did no more than let the Reformation run its course. He neither firmly supported it nor totally eliminated the institutions of the Old Church. By Frederick's death in 1556, the country had become Lutheran and there were already many followers of Calvin's doctrine. It was his successor, Ottheinrich, who first gave the Palatine (and thus also in the Upper Palatine) religious policy the character of vigorous interference, with the issue of his "Palatinate Order of the Church" of 1556, and the introduction of systematic church inspections. Under this ruler religious coercion and rigid church discipline put an end to the state of affairs by which hitherto

religious matters had been allowed to develop as a societal matter. This was to have a dramatic effect the moment a new elector revoked the religious agreement with his subjects. Ottheinrich's successor, Frederick III, who ruled from 1559-76, made the enforcement of the Calvinist doctrine a matter of his office as ruler of the country ("Landesfürst").³⁷ Paradoxically, Calvin's religious practice, completely based on the communal principle, thus became the powerfully and violently enforced state doctrine. During the reign of this ruler the last monasteries still existing were abolished.

Especially in the Upper Palatinate this policy of denominationalisation met with firm opposition. The Provincial Diet and the governor of Amberg (i.e. the provincial capital), Frederick's own son Ludwig, refused to submit, and defended Lutheranism, to which almost the whole country adhered. But Frederick III did succeed in expelling numerous Lutheran vicars, replacing them with Calvinists. But these, thus in turn, were chased away in favour of Lutherans under the rule of his son and successor. Later another ruler forced Calvinism on the country again. In the 1620's the Upper Palatinate finally came under the rule of the experienced and militant Maximilian of Bavaria. By 1648 he had achieved the reintroduction of Catholicism, which then remained the established creed in the Upper Palatinate as everywhere else in Bavaria.

These exemplary cases may be sufficient to demonstrate that, and in what way, the territorial rulers ("Landesfürsten") in Germany determined the course of the Reformation, its accomplishment or its suppression, and how they also imposed their personal religious choice on their subjects by governmental means of coercion.

A Comparison With the Members of the Reformed Church in Western Europe and North America

Before turning to the evaluation of these examples, let us return to the churches and sects of Western Europe and North America discussed by Weber, in order to see what was common to their believers and how they differed from their German brothers in

faith:³⁸ Like the Germans, they were subject to the strictest pressure exercised by the authorities—except in America. In the Netherlands the Spanish kings fought to enforce Catholicism, as did the French kings in their own country, while the English rulers insisted on the monopoly of the Anglican High Church. After the Netherlands had cast off Spanish rule, the state machinery of this country no longer served any ruler who would have sought to elevate himself above society, but was implemented by one religious party against the other. After the Synod of Dordrecht of 1618/19 the followers of the one Calvinist school, with the help of all state methods of coercion, did not actually drive the adherents of the other branch out of the country but they did oust them from their ecclesiastical and political posts and from schools and universities. The French Protestants were never in a position to control the state. Yet for over a hundred years they held their own ground in their fight for survival in the Catholic Kingdom of France, until finally their leaders had to go abroad as religious refugees. In spite of centuries of oppressive policies, the English kings were never able to force Britain's Catholics and the Puritans, and all the many Protestant sects, totally out of the country, or force them into their Anglican Church. It was only in America that the many Protestant and Baptist communities were free from similar interference and able to keep to themselves from the beginning.

So the religious movements observed by Weber do not differ from German Protestantism because the former could in principle have developed peacefully and without state pressure and were militant only when on the defensive. Nor did they differ with regard to the question of religious tolerance. As for religious freedom, the situation in the Netherlands would indeed have been a bad example: There the two rivalling schools of Protestants fought each other, in turn using the instruments of state power; the oppression of Catholics, Puritans and all kinds of Dissenters in England would also have been a bad example for religious freedom among Protestants. And besides, there was tolerance and religious freedom in Germany, too.

What was common to the groups of people which Weber turned to in order to examine the relationship of religiousness and the economic ethic, and what at the same time separated them from the

Protestants in the German territories was something quite different: they were people who themselves, or whose ancestors, without or against the coercive power of the rulers, had victoriously fought for their religion, and not only for its spread and against its oppression but also, among other things, with the institute of 'church discipline', for its purity and an appropriate way of life. They were people who refused to abandon their religion or left Europe to go to America because of their beliefs. They either lived outside the area of royal absolute rule as was the case in the Netherlands or in America, or they wrested the sheer survival of their communities and the spread of their doctrine from their rulers in defiance of incessant absolute oppression and persecution.

It was the more or less absolute rule of the sovereigns over the religious belief of all subjects, which the Protestants observed by Weber, each group in their own way, either got rid of—as with the Dutch and the Americans—or resisted—as with England and France. It was in Germany however, that the monarchs, each elevated over the society in his country, might victoriously appear as religious fighters, in many cases forcing their religious choice upon their subjects. In this we may perhaps grasp the most important difference to the German development: that no royal pressure broke or altered the faith and the religious life of the Protestants of the West examined by Weber.

There was another important difference to the situation in Germany: where no monarchic power ruled the religious lives of the people, the question of religious freedom and tolerance appears totally different to where the ruler and thus the state decided on the people's religion. With the Western Protestants, ecclesiastical life was a main issue of their inner-social organisation in fellowships and neighbourhoods. Within this society, an internally binding and outwardly distinguishing accord developed in matters of faith and conduct of life.³⁹ This agreement had nothing to do with tolerance—it was religious, disciplined the people and exerted pressure in the form of church discipline ('Kirchenzucht'); by its nature it scarcely bore divergences if at all. But the effect of such pressure varied: those who lived within this accord did not experience its pressure as compulsion; the only people to suffer were those who abandoned the consent. The intolerance and

monitoring of conformity by the fellowships thus meant as a rule that those people who shared the consent had no lasting experience of control and oppression. The consent and its controls did not permanently affect the experience of freedom; whereas expelling or oppressing deviations and deviants provided something like liberation from a threat to the majority. Tolerance, as in the Lower Rhine area and at times in East Frisia, was only rarely part, as it were, of the states' constitution.

Thus as far as their faith was concerned the Protestants examined by Weber lived under the conditions of fellowship consent and without submission to royal power—more precisely: they lived with a religious choice which they also upheld against a ruler's claim of power. But this was totally different from the believers of nearly all denominations in Germany, where the principle of coercive regulation of religious life was almost universally asserted by the authorities. The will of the ruler did not need any social consent. Wherever he exercised charge over the religious practice of his subjects, religious coercion prevailed.⁴⁰ The experience of freedom failed to materialize even for those who shared the faith of the prince.

III. Consequences of 'Konfessionalisierung' by the Territorial Rulers

We shall now attempt to draw conclusions about the effects of the use of the monarchic power in denominational conflict by comparing the history of denominationalisation in Germany on the one hand and in the Western countries on the other hand:

The fact that Protestantism had been able to gain a foothold in the church land of Salzburg was a result of the inconsistent denominational policy of the Salzburg archbishops. Protestants owed their survival to the tenacity with which they later evaded the absolute state and fostered their devotion to God's Word, by reading, reflecting and talking together in secret conventicles free of active governmental interference. This is the basis of that specifically verbal intellectual culture which has already been referred to here several times as 'Word Culture'. But because the number of Protestants in Salzburg was small and their isolation great, and thus contact with academically educated men and

intellectuals was lacking, no recognizable contribution to German intellectual culture emerged from this constant cultivation of an independent Word Culture. That Salzburg's economic development, apart from mining, was characterized by a standstill in the early modern times in spite of the existence of mineral resources might also specifically have been a result of the oppression and expulsion of the Protestants—as the argument by analogy suggests of the Bavarian and Upper Palatinate circumstances.

The Saxon Protestants, just like the Western Protestants, lived—with regard to their religion—under the conditions of fellowship consent and without the coercive influence of the authorities. Comparison with the denominational development of the Upper Palatinate is able to demonstrate that these conditions were of greater importance for the arousing of the modern bourgeois economic ethic, and thus for the economic capitalist development of Saxony, than the abundant mining resources. In the Upper Palatinate the economic structure based on the mineral resources collapsed in step with religious belief becoming the subject of state coercion. We shall immediately return to this after a short look at the situation in the Duchy of Bavaria.

The price of Bavarian religious policy was high. By the time this policy had eventually been successfully pursued with increasing pressure for around 125 years, the country had lost its traditional position in German intellectual culture.⁴¹ The ground had dried up from which a culture, characterized by the free use of the word in speech and writing, could have blossomed. But it should at least be mentioned here in passing that this same religious policy whose repressive elements were of importance to our topic moulded the future profile of Bavaria's architecture and folk culture to a high degree.⁴²

Now back to the Upper Palatinate as a striking example of the degree to which a ruler's rigidly repressive denominational policy affected and even smothered the economic and cultural potentials that—as Weber discovered—were contained in the denominational option. The region in question had been a centre of the European iron industry towards the end of the Middle Ages. The people of Nuremberg had largely based their wealth on the processing of iron from the Upper Palatinate. Already before the period with which

we are concerned here, the significance of this industry had diminished. In the 16th century its decline accelerated and at the end of the 17th century it had almost disappeared without other branches of economy having replaced it.⁴³ If our previous observations are correct we can, from this decline, infer a decline of that capitalist sense of acquisition (“*Erwerbsgeist*”) which definitely must have been in existence at the beginning of the era, and whose development was so striking since the same period in Protestant Saxony. Without doubt this decline was partly, perhaps even primarily, a result of the many imposed denominational changes,⁴⁴ as these provoked the development of a certain willingness and capacity for external conformity moreover giving a rather ostentatious and occasionally ecstatic character to the religious commitments and forms of expression of the people. There was a lasting alteration of mental structures. Its effect was so profound that the country has only begun to recover culturally and economically in recent decades.

Conclusion

At the outset, it was established that there is a peculiar tension between Weber’s so-called Protestantism Thesis and the denominational circumstances of Germany. The gap can be bridged by demonstrating how the sovereigns’ governmental exercise of power in the Reformation period influenced the society, economy and culture of different German territories and by showing that this exercise of power led to basic differences to the circumstances of the Protestants in Western Europe and America. Connections between governmental repression, denominational profile and the development of culture and economic potential have become apparent: The means (continuity and methods) of the rulers’ religious policies— independent of the religious choice finally asserted by the people of an area—exerted their own influence on the mentality of the people and with this on the culture, the economic views and the economic potential of the country.

The more steady and severe this repressive policy was, the more strongly it affected the possibilities of the development of the ‘spirit of capitalism’ described by Weber—possibilities which were

already established both in the literary culture and methods of the urban economy of the Middle Ages, in Humanism and the Renaissance as well as in the choice of faith and denominational affiliation. To put it another way at the risk of a certain exaggeration: Calvinism and the related reformed schools relevant to Weber's formation of his thesis (pietism, puritanism, methodism) supported the tendency for the development of that Word Culture which has repeatedly been mentioned here and of the modern middle class with its specifically ascetic and capitalist ethic of economy which was already at work before the Reformation in the Renaissance and in Humanism. Even in those areas where Calvinism was rejected—predominantly in Lutheran Saxony—this tendency could develop further, under favorable conditions and without interference, and then occasionally unleash stronger cultural and economic forces. The same pre-Calvinist economic ethic and the same tendency to the bourgeois-methodical way of life and to the intellectual use of the Word would, however, in other regions be nipped in the bud, according to the severity and duration of governmental repression in the denominational struggle.

That is why even in many Protestant territories of Germany those chances inherent in Protestantism for the development of the mentality and the economic ethic were severely affected by the grip of monarchic power.⁴⁵ That was the case in the Upper Palatinate—and possibly elsewhere, too, in the Calvinist area. Here, these effects of repressive monarchic policy even defeated the tendencies for improvement of the methodical way of life and the development of Word Culture founded in Calvinism. The consequences, however, hit those parts which would eventually become Catholic parts of Germany the hardest: in vast areas the denominationalisation through the rulers adhering to the Old Church cut deep into cultural and economic development. For the price of suppression of the Reformation lay in the fact that such old traditions and lines of development were severed abruptly, while freely displaying their specific dynamics under the Lutheran princes of the time.

Curtailed even further and also generalized with regard to Weber's Protestantism Thesis: Both individual belief and the rulers' power over this belief influenced equally vigorously and lastingly the mentality of all people concerned. Even more

generalized: depending on whether and to what extent the religious and intellectual culture of a society are subjected to state oppression and coercive formation over a long period of time, the intellectual culture and economic attitude and potential of this society will develop. Life-style, economic ethic and cultural profile of many later generations depend on this.⁴⁶

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All bibliographic annotations to Weber's texts refer to their original German versions. Quotations are taken from the accepted English translations.

¹ Cf. Karl-Ludwig Ay, "Vielfalt in Mitteleuropa: Herrschaft und Untertan, Region, Religion," in: Ferdinand Seibt (ed.), *Die böhmischen Länder zwischen Ost und West* (Fs. Karl Bosl), München—Wien 1983, pp. 113-125, about diversity as a German structural feature.

² Martin Offenbacher, *Konfession und soziale Schichtung. Eine Studie über die wirtschaftliche Lage der Katholiken und Protestanten in Baden* (Volkswirtschaftliche Abhandlungen der badischen Hochschulen, vol. 4,5), Tübingen 1901.

³ Proof by Paul Münch (ed.), *Ordnung, Fleiß und Sparsamkeit. Texte und Dokumente zur Entstehung der "bürgerlichen Tugenden"*, München 1984, also Münch, "Welcher Zusammenhang besteht zwischen Konfession und ökonomischem Verhalten? Max Webers These im Lichte der historischen Forschung," in: Hans-Georg Wehling (ed.), *Konfession—eine Nebensache? Politische, soziale und kulturelle Ausprägungen religiöser Unterschiede in Deutschland*, Stuttgart 1984, pp. 58-74, here: p. 59 ff.

⁴ Offenbacher's book contains, p. 25 ff. [= 433 ff.], without differentiation of the reformed denominations, a tabular survey of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and of the contemporary denominational profile of the diverse territories incorporated in the Grand Duchy of Baden. Since the Napoleonic Wars considerable parts of old Electorate of the Palatinate with their strong Calvinist traditions—vide the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563—belonged to this member of the German Reich. A topographic-chronological survey of the German regions in

which Calvinism spread is found in Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750* (Christianity and Society in the Modern World), London/New York 1989, pp. 26-38, and more recently in Heinrich R. Schmidt, *Konfessionalisierung im 16. Jahrhundert* (Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 12), München 1992.

⁵ In particular I refer to Weber's series of essays first published in 1904-05 on 'the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism' (a new edition is planned for dept. I, vol. 9 of the Max Weber-Gesamtausgabe [MWG]), and in the version of 1920: Max Weber, "Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus" (PE), in: Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (GARS), vol. 1, Tübingen 1920 (unchanged ⁹1988), pp. 17-206 (planned for MWG I/19). Weber's reference to Offenbacher is found in PE, p. 18 f. with note 1. The most recent attempt, "Max Weber verstehen zu lernen; genauer: verständlich zu machen, was das Problem der 'Protestantischen Ethik' war", has been undertaken by Hartmann Tyrell, "Worum geht es in der 'Protestantischen Ethik'? Ein Versuch zum besseren Verständnis Max Webers," in: *Saeculum* 41 (1990), (quot.: p. 130; *ibid.*, pp. 173-177, recent literature!) With his Protestantism Thesis Max Weber addresses mainly the Calvinist branch of the Reformation; in Germany he finds an analogous religiousness only by the Lutheran pietism of Spener and Franck and later by Zinzendorf's brotherhood. The most general formulation of Weber's Protestantism Thesis is found in the posthumously published manuscripts of Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (WuG), Tübingen 1920 (the first edition earns preference over the revised new editions, e.g. ⁵1985). WuG¹, pp. 808 ff. (Translation follows Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, 3rd vol., New York 1968, pp. 1198 ff.): "The basic dogma of strict Calvinism, the doctrine of predestination, makes it impossible for the church to administer sacraments whose reception can have any significance for eternal salvation. [...] The inscrutability of predestination to either salvation or damnation was naturally intolerable to the believer; he searched for the *certitudo salutis*, for an indication that he belonged to the elect. Since otherworldly ascetism had been rejected, he could find this certainty, on the one hand, in the conviction that he was acting according to the letter of the law and according to reason, repressing all animal drives; on the other, he could find it in visible proofs that God blessed his work. [...] however, for the believer and his community, his own ethical conduct and fate in the secular social order became supremely important as an indication of his state of grace. A person was judged elect or condemned as an entity; [...] Therefore, the individual could only be sure of his state of grace if he felt reason to believe that, by adhering to a principle of methodical conduct, he pursued the sole correct path in all his action—that he worked for God's glory. [...] The curtailment of all feudal ostentation and of all irrational consumption facilitates capital accumulation and the ever-renewed utilization of property for productive purposes; this-worldly ascetism as a whole favors the breeding and exaltation of the professionalism needed by capitalism and bureaucracy. [...] Here has been attained the union of religious postulate and bourgeois style of life that promotes capitalism."

Most recently Karl-Heinrich Kaufhold, in his summary of Weber's thesis, in: "Protestantische Ethik, Kapitalismus und Beruf. Überlegungen zu Max Webers Aufsatz aus der Sicht der Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte," in: Bertram Schefold (ed.), [Max Weber und seine "Protestantische Ethik"]. *Vademecum zu einem Klassiker der Geschichte der ökonomischen Rationalität*, Düsseldorf 1992, pp. 69-91, emphasizes the relationship between Weber's "ascetic Protestantism",

“bourgeois ‘Berufsethik’ ” and “ ‘Berufsmenschentum’ ” (Kaufhold, pp. 77-84).

⁶ From the literature which, referring to Weber, deals with the effects of Protestantism on economy and culture we might take here: Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia (note 4); Hisao Otsuka, *The Spirit of Capitalism. The Max Weber Thesis in an Economic Historic Perspective*, Tokyo 1982, as well as more recently Schefold (note 5), and Hans-Josef Hellmer, *Die Genese des Kapitalismus. Studien im Anschluß an Max Weber*, 2 vols., Frankfurt a.M./Berlin/Bern/New York/Paris/Wien 1993; Hellmer’s ‘Einleitung’, vol. 1, pp. 6-15, is entitled: “Ca. 90 Jahre Kritik der Protestantischen Ethik und einige Folgerungen daraus”. Criticism of Weber’s thesis began immediately after its first publication. The controversy in Weber’s lifetime is documented by Johannes Winckelmann (ed.), *Max Weber. Die protestantische Ethik II. Kritiken und Antikritiken*, Gütersloh ⁵1987; *ibid.*, pp. 395-429, a “Bibliographie zur Kontroversalliteratur”. Paul Münch (see note 3) gives a survey of the arguments put forth in the academic controversy which has continued since the first publication of Weber’s Protestantism essays 1904-05. The anthology by Hartmut Lehmann and Guenther Roth (ed.), *Weber’s Protestant Ethic. Origins, Evidence, Contexts*, Washington and Cambridge 1993, is not yet available to me. It will continue the discussion.

It is the reference to the aspect of political geography and geography of faith which I hope will be the contribution of this paper to the current discussion.

⁷ Also cf. note 3. Heinrich Richard Schmidt, “Die Christianisierung des Sozialverhaltens als permanente Reformation. Aus der Praxis reformierter Sittengerichte in der Schweiz während der frühen Neuzeit,” in: Peter Blickle and Johannes Kunisch (ed.), *Kommunalisierung und Christianisierung. Voraussetzungen und Folgen der Reformation 1400-1600* (Zeitschr. für hist. Forschung. Supplement 9), Berlin 1989, pp. 113-163, concisely summarizes on p. 116: “The Weber interpretation of Protestantism is speculative. It has admittedly kept historical science fascinated to today, in Anglo-Saxon countries Weber almost has the status of an Anti-Marx, but it lacks empirical substantiation.” Kaufhold (note 5), pp. 69-91, on the other hand claims—essentially more cautiously—p. 69f. and similarly p. 86 that historians have involved themselves “comparatively little” in the discussion about PE (note 5).

⁸ See Weber in note 5.

⁹ It is therefore definitely not due to carelessness that an outstanding expert such as Peter Blickle fails to mention Weber in his study: *Gemeindereformation. Die Menschen des 16. Jahrhunderts auf dem Weg zum Heil*, München ²1987. Schmidt, *Konfessionalisierung* (note 4), pp. 94 and 117, only mentions Weber as discussed by Gerhard Oestreich und Heinz Schilling (but cf. notes 7 and 11), and in William John Wright’s book: *Capitalism, the State, and the Lutheran Reformation: Sixteenth-century Hesse*, Athens (Ohio) 1988, which bears a title that almost sounds like a paraphrase of the PE (note 5), Weber does not appear in the bibliography.

¹⁰ E.g. Max Weber, “Vorbemerkung” in: *GARS* 1 (note 5), p. 11-16 (translated as “Author’s Introduction” by Talcott Parsons, in: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, ed. by Antony Giddens, London ²¹1991, pp. 13-31), as well as Max Weber, “Antikritisches Schlußwort zum ‘Geist des Kapitalismus’ ”, in: *Die protestantische Ethik II* (note 6), pp. 283-345, here: p. 294 ff. Karl-Heinrich Kaufhold (note 5) gives pp. 87-91 the “misunderstandings and misinterpretations” as indicated here a paragraph of their own.

¹¹ PE, *passim*. Similarly Schmidt (note 7), p. 166, with reference to Günter Abramowski, *Das Geschichtsbild Max Webers. Universalgeschichte am Leitfaden des*

okzidental Rationalisierungsprozesses, Stuttgart 1966, observes that Weber's interpretation of Protestantism "is based on religious literature which almost exclusively stems from the Anglo-Saxon countries and from the 17th century."

¹² In: *Großer Historischer Weltatlas*, published by Bayer. Schulbuch-Verlag, 3. part: *Neuzeit*, ed. by Joseph Engel and Ernst Walter Zeeden, München 41981, map 41a.

¹³ Heinz Schilling has subsumed the process we have in mind here under the concept of 'Konfessionalisierung' in: "Die Konfessionalisierung im Reich. Religiöser und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in Deutschland zwischen 1555 und 1620," in: *HZ* 246, 1988, pp. 1-45. This term has gained general acceptance. Cf. the recent discussion of the concept by Johannes Wallmann, "Lutherische Konfessionalisierung—ein Überblick," in: Hans-Christoph Rublack (ed.), *Die lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland* (Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgesch. 197), Gütersloh 1992, pp. 33-53, here: p. 35 ff.

¹⁴ Weber, *GARS* 1, p. 84 (= *PE* engl.—note 10—p. 95). The most recent survey of these groups, so far as they were important in Germany, is Hans-Jürgen Goertz's *Religiöse Bewegungen in der frühen Neuzeit* (Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 20), München 1993.

¹⁵ Cf. Oskar Bartel, *Jan Łaski. Leben und Werk des polnischen Reformators*, (Ost-)Berlin 1964, esp. pp. 100-194, a biography of the key figure of East Frisian Protestantism; Heinz Schilling, "Einleitung," in: Schilling and Klaus-Dieter Schreiber (ed.), *Die Kirchenratsprotokolle der reformierten Gemeinde Emden 1557-1620*, part 1: 1557-1574 (Städteforschung, series C, vol. 3,1), Köln/Wien 1989, pp. X-XLIII; *ibid.* detailed bibliography. Giving special attention to the Old Church aspect most recently Menno Smid, "Ostfriesland," in: Anton Schindling, Walter Ziegler (ed.), *Die Territorien des Reichs im Zeitalter der Reformation und Konfessionalisierung. Land und Konfession 1500-1650*, up to now 5 vols., Münster 1989-1993, here: vol. 3: *Der Nordwesten*, pp. 162-180. On the religious refugees from the Netherlands, for whom Emden was only one of many destinations, see Heinz Schilling, "Die niederländischen Exulanten des 16. Jahrhunderts. Ein Beitrag zum Typus der frühneuzeitlichen Konfessionsmigration," in: *GWU* (1992), pp. 67-78.

¹⁶ Cf. especially Bartel, *Łaski*, p. 110 f., and Smid, p. 171 ff. (both note 15).

¹⁷ The discussion about the appropriateness of the concept of the "second Reformation" is a main topic of the conference volume by Heinz Schilling (ed.), *Die reformierte Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland—Das Problem der "Zweiten Reformation"* (Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 195), Gütersloh 1986,—herein particularly the survey by Schilling, "Die 'Zweite Reformation' als Kategorie der Geschichtswissenschaft," *ibid.*, pp. 387-437. In spite of Wilhelm Heinrich Neusel's rejection of the historical concept of the "zweite Reformation," in: "Die Erforschung der 'Zweiten Reformation'—eine wissenschaftliche Fehlentwicklung," *Ibid.*, pp. 379-386, the term is used here to describe the—successful and unsuccessful—efforts to establish Calvinism in German territories. Concise surveys are also found in R. Po-Chia Hsia (note 4) and more recently in Schmidt, *Konfessionalisierung* (note 4); references also in the literature quoted here about the individual territories.

¹⁸ Schmidt, *Konfessionalisierung*, pp. 50-54. Brandenburg: Rudolf von Thadden, "Die Fortsetzung des 'Reformationswerks' in Brandenburg-Preußen," in: Schilling, *Reformierte Konfessionalisierung*, pp. 233-250; Saxony: cf. note 25; Electoral- and Upper Palatinate: cf. note 36; Hesse-Kassel: Gerhard Menk, "Die 'Zweite Reformation' in Hessen-Kassel. Landgraf Moritz und die Einführung der

Verbesserungspunkte," in: Schilling, loc. cit., pp. 154-183; Wright (note 9); cf. also Manfred Rudersdorf, *Ludwing IV., Landgraf von Hessen-Marburg, 1537-1604. Landesteilung und Luthertum in Hessen* (VO des Inst. für Europ. Gesch. 144), Mainz 1991.

¹⁹ Most recently see Martin Heckel, "Religionsbann und Landesherrliches Kirchenregiment," in Rublack, *Lutherische Konfessionalisierung* (note 13), pp. 130-162.

²⁰ Christa Reinhardt, Commentary on the map "Übergang zum Protestantismus in Nordwestdeutschland", in: *Großer Historischer Weltatlas* (note 12), part 3: *Neuzeit. Erläuterungen*, ed. by Ernst Walter Zeeden, München 1984, p. 81. The earlier phase of spread and consolidation of the Reformation described by Reinhardt — Schmidt, *Konfessionalisierung* (note 4), p. 5, here speaking of "autochthone Konfessionalisierung"—with the emphasis on the south German, above all the Alemannic, area before and during the Peasants' War, is the subject of Blickle, *Gemeindereformation* (note 9). Peter Blickle, "Die Reformation vor dem Hintergrund von Kommunalisierung und Christianisierung. Eine Skizze," in: Blickle/Kunisch (note 7), pp. 9-28, makes the point, in contrast to Reinhardt, that "in large areas of north Germany" the rural population was only won over for the Reformation "via coercive conversion enforced by the territorial church authorities ('Kirchentümer')." As far as the Reformation was not imposed by the rulers it took place above all in the towns. Cf. Heinz Schilling, *Aufbruch und Krise. Deutschland 1517-1648* (Siedler Deutsche Geschichte. Das Reich und die Deutschen), Berlin 1988, pp. 162-183.

²¹ The work of Frank-Michael Kuhlemann may be left out of consideration here: "Protestantismus und Politik. Deutsche Traditionen seit dem 16. Jahrhundert in vergleichender Perspektive," in: *Was ist Gesellschaftsgeschichte? Positionen, Themen, Analysen* (Fs. Hans-Ulrich Wehler), München 1991, pp. 301-311. Its topic is the question whether and to what extent Lutheranism was involved in Germany's pursuit of its "special path". A recent survey on the regional history of the Reformation within the Holy Roman Empire is found in the vols. of Schindling/Ziegler (note 15) and in Schmidt, *Konfessionalisierung* (note 4), esp. p. 9 f. and 44 f. The resistance of the subjects to coercive conversion is a main theme of Paul Münch, "Volkskultur und Calvinismus. Zu Theorie und Praxis der 'reformatio vitae' während der 'Zweiten Reformation'," in: Schilling, *Reformierte Konfessionalisierung* (note 17), pp. 291-307. Cf. also Schmidt, loc. cit., p. 49 f., and Po-Chia Hsia (note 4), p. 135 ff., as well as note 40 below.

²² Cf. the analogous subdivision of the vols. 1 ("Der Südosten") and 2 ("Der Nordosten") by Schindling/Ziegler. The diversity of denominational conditions and the opposition and interaction between the ruler and the regional powers in the course of the 'Konfessionalisierung' of Austria have recently been made the central theme in Thomas Winkelbauer, "Sozialdisziplinierung in den österreichischen und böhmischen Ländern im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," in: *Zeitschr. für hist. Forschung* 19 (1992), pp. 317-339.

²³ Ernst Walter Zeeden, "Salzburg," in: Schindling/Ziegler 1: *Der Südosten*, pp. 72-85; Gerhard Florey, *Geschichte der Salzburger Protestanten und ihrer Emigration 1731/32* (Studien und Texte zur Kirchengeschichte und Geschichte, series 1, vol. 2), Wien/Köln/Graz 1977; Mack Walker, *The Salzburg Transaction. Expulsion and Redemption in 18th-Century Germany*, Ithaca/London 1992; also important the essay section in the exhibition catalogue: Friederike Zaisberger (ed.), *Reformation, Emigration. Protestanten in Salzburg*, Salzburg 1981.

²⁴ Georg W. Sennig, "Salzburgs städtebauliche Entwicklung unter Wolf Dietrich," in the exhibition catalogue: *Fürstbischof Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau. Gründer des barocken Salzburg*, Salzburg 1987, pp. 196-200.

²⁵ Karlheinz Blaschke, *Sachsen im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 185), Gütersloh 1970; also by Blaschke, "Religion und Politik in Kursachsen 1586-1591," in: Schilling, *Reformierte Konfessionalisierung* (note 17), pp. 79-97; Karl Czok (ed.), *Geschichte Sachsens*, Weimar 1989, pp. 180-236; Heribert Smolinsky, "Albertinisches Sachsen," in: Schindling/Ziegler 2: *Der Nordosten*, pp. 8-32; Thomas Klein, "Ernestinisches Sachsen, kleinere thüringische Gebiete," *ibid.* 4: *Mittleres Deutschland*, pp. 8-39.

²⁶ See Hektor Amman's map 'Wirtschaft und Verkehr im Spätmittelalter um 1500', supplement to: Hermann Aubin and Wolfgang Zorn (ed.), *Handbuch der deutschen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1971.

²⁷ See note 12.

²⁸ Against this Blaschke, *Sachsen* (note 25) on p. 114 ff. emphasises the hardships caused by the denominational policy of territorial rulers and the pressure exercised to enforce the change of faith.

²⁹ Hans Prescher, "Georgius Agricola (1494-1555) und seine Beziehungen zu Herzog und Kurfürst Moritz 1543-1553," in: *Sächsische Heimatblätter* 35 (1989), pp. 209-211.

³⁰ Karl-Ludwig Ay, *Altbayern von 1180 bis 1550* (Dokumente zur Geschichte von Staat und Gesellschaft in Bayern I/2), München 1977, p. 208 f. and pp. 274-291; also by Ay, *Land und Fürst im alten Bayern. 16.-18. Jahrhundert*, Regensburg 1988, pp. 185-262; Karl Bosl, *Bayerische Geschichte*, München 1971 (many reprints), pp. 165-187; Benno Hubensteiner, *Vom Geist des Barock. Kultur und Frömmigkeit im alten Bayern*, München ²1978, pp. 11-28, 108-121; Andreas Kraus, *Maximilian I. Bayerns Großer Kurfürst*, Graz/Wien/Köln/Regensburg 1990, pp. 321-335; Walter Ziegler, "Bayern," in: Schindling/Ziegler 1: *Der Südosten*, pp. 56-70; also by Ziegler, *Altbayern von 1550-1651* (Dokumente...I/3 [in 2 parts]), München 1992, passim, esp. pp. 80-91, and "Altbayern 1517-1648" in: Walter Brandmüller (ed.), *Handbuch der bayerischen Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 2, St. Ottilien 1993, pp. 1-64.

³¹ Compare the origins and lives of the authors treated in any German literary history of the Middle Ages.

³² Karl Bosl, "Johannes Turmair, gen. Aventinus aus Abensberg in seiner Zeit," in: *Aventin und die Geschichte. Zum 500. Geburtstag* (Zeitschr. für bayr. Landesgesch. 40,2/3), München 1977, pp. 325-340; here: p. 328 ff. with note 14.

³³ Gertrud Stetter, "Philipp Apian 1531-1589. Zur Biographie," in: Hans Wolff (ed.), *Philipp Apian und die Kartographie der Renaissance* (Bayer. Staatsbibliothek. Ausstellungskataloge. 50), Weissenhorn 1989, pp. 66-73. Further examples in Dieter Breuer, "Literatur vom späten Mittelalter bis ins Zeitalter des Barock (1350-1750)," in: Albrecht Weber (ed.), *Handbuch der Literatur in Bayern. Vom Frühmittelalter bis zur Gegenwart. Geschichte und Interpretation*, Regensburg 1987, p. 144.

³⁴ Dieter Breuer was the first to make literary policy in Bavaria a subject of research: *Oberdeutsche Literatur 1565-1650. Deutsche Literaturgeschichte und Territorialgeschichte in frühabsolutistischer Zeit* (Zeitschr. für Bayer. Landesgeschichte, supplement 11), München 1979, p. 22f. Cf. also Ay, *Land und Fürst* (note 30), p. 201, which also relates to the below.

³⁵ Ay, *ibid.*, p. 205.

³⁶ Klaus Köhle, *Landesherr und Landstände in der Oberpfalz von 1400-1583. Sozialstruktur und politische Repräsentanz eines frühneuzeitlichen Territoriums* (Misc.

Bavar. Monac. 16), München 1969, pp. 90-174; Franziska Nadwornicek, "Pfalz-Neuburg," in: Schindling/Ziegler 1 (note 15), pp. 44-55; Anton Schindling and Walter Ziegler, "Kurpfalz, Rheinische Pfalz und Oberpfalz," *ibid.*, vol. 5, 1993, pp. 8-49. Volker Press, *Calvinismus und Territorialstaat. Regierung und Zentralbehörden der Kurpfalz 1559-1619* (Kieler Hist. Studien 7), Stuttgart 1970, esp. pp. 111-129, from p. 168 passim; also by Volker Press, "Die 'Zweite Reformation' in der Kurpfalz," in: Schilling, *Reformierte Konfessionalisierung* (note 17), pp. 104-129; Wilhelm Volkert, "Oberpfalz," in: Max Spindler (ed.), *Handbuch der bayer. Geschichte*, vol. 3/2, München 1971 (reprints), pp. 1251-1370, here: pp. 1299-1370.

^{36a} Ay, *Dokumente* (note 30), pp. 60-64, 124-129, 139-150.

³⁷ In the same way this so-called second Reformation took place almost uniformly in Germany as the imposition of the ruler's choice of faith upon his subjects by various instruments of religious coercion; Schilling, *Reformierte Konfessionalisierung* (note 17), passim; Schmidt, *Konfessionalisierung* (note 9), passim; Po-Chia Hsia (note 4), p. 34 ff.

³⁸ Kuhlemann (note 21) contrasts the political behavior and mentality of the German Lutherans with those of the Western Calvinists.

³⁹ The German examples for this are Bremen and again East Frisia with the town of Emden, the "Geneva of the North".

⁴⁰ Given the reluctance of the people against the enforcement of Reformed Church discipline (as vividly described by Münch, *Volkskultur* (note 21), p. 303 f.)—a reluctance which went as far as the ostracism of the "Elder Laymen" or "Superiors" by their neighbours—it would be worth examining whether those ostracised superiors were executing the ruler's intention or fellowship consent. This would also permit the decision whether in places where the ruler determined his subjects' choice of faith by way of specific denominational policies a distinction is at all possible between the effects of governmental policies on the one hand and of the teaching of the ministry on the other hand with regard to people's way of life and to the so-called "social disciplining" of people. Cf. also the observation of Schmidt, *Konfessionalisierung* (note 5), p. 57 f.

⁴¹ This does not mean to say that Catholic Bavaria became illiterate as a result of denominational policy. Yet the sovereign's and the Jesuits' literature policy ('Literaturpolitik') succeeded in orientating literary activity in Bavaria to Catholic and Romance Europe—above all by the immigration of foreign, undoubtedly orthodox Catholic authors. Cf. Breuer (note 34), passim. Electoral Bavaria now itself scarcely produced autochthonous authors who used the German language in great works. In Bavaria therefore no more literature developed in the German language the quality of which would have allowed it to take an effective part in the further development of the German language and national literature. It was not only in the area of scholarly pursuit that the German language, like everywhere else, was scarcely used in Bavaria, but also in the literary sphere. According to Ingo Reiffenstein's research, in the middle of the 18th century the scholars from the midst of whom the Electoral Bavarian Academy of Sciences (founded 1759) recruited its members, first had to settle the question in which standardised form of German they wanted to speak to each other and publish their works. After long consideration the choice fell on Gottsched's Meissnian German. Cf. Ingo Reiffenstein, "Gottsched und die Bayern. Der Parnassus Boicus, die Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften und die Pflege der deutschen Sprache im 18. Jahrhundert," in: *Stuttgarter Arbeiten zur Germanistik* 231 (Fs. Rudolf Große), Stuttgart 1989, pp. 177-184. Today in the same Academy, according to the current members' list of 1991, the share of the full and corresponding members born in

the area of the former Electorate of Bavaria who belong to the Philosophic-historical Class, which is, naturally, more orientated to "Word Culture", reaches only two thirds of their share of the members of the Mathematic-scientific Class. Surveys on the development of the literature in Bavaria are provided in the excellent volume by Hans Pörnbacher (ed.), *Die Literatur des Barock* (Bayerische Bibliothek. Texte aus zwölf Jahrhunderten, vol. 2), München 1986, the two-volumed *Bayerische Literaturgeschichte in ausgewählten Beispielen*, ed. by Eberhard Dünninger and Dorothee Kiesselbach, München 1965-1967, and last but not least in the *Handbuch der Literatur in Bayern* (note 33). With regard to the weight those works carry in the wider context of German literature as a whole, it is advisable to turn to the accepted German literary histories. The origins and lives of the authors mentioned there rarely indicate Bavaria.

⁴² This is the topic of Hubensteiner's book (above, note 30).

⁴³ Eckart Schremmer, "Das Oberpfälzer Montangebiet," in: Spindler, *Handbuch* 3 (note 35), pp. 1371-1386; essays by Rudolf Endres, Dirk Götschmann, Gerd Hofmann, Volker Nichelmann, Rolf Sprandel, Hans-Heinrich Vangerow and Wolfgang F. Waldner, in: *Die Oberpfalz. Ein europäisches Eisenzentrum. 600 Jahre Große Hammereinung* (Schriftenreihe des Bergbau- und Industriemuseums Ostbayern in Theuern 12/1), 1987.

⁴⁴ Cf. Köhle (note 36), p. 173.

⁴⁵ Weber was also highly conscious of this correlation. Cf. PE engl. (note 10), p. 152: "[...] the ecclesiastical supervision of the life of the individual, which, as it was practised in the Calvinistic State Churches, almost amounted to an inquisition, might even retard that liberation of individual powers which was conditioned by the rational ascetic pursuit of salvation, and in some cases actually did so."

⁴⁶ With reference to the society of the collapsing Soviet power bloc these final remarks formed a main theme of the ensuing discussion on this lecture in Moscow 1990.

BOOK REVIEWS

EMILE BENVENISTE, *Indoeuropäische Institutionen. Wortschatz, Geschichte, Funktionen*. Aus dem Französischen von Wolfgang Bayer, Dieter Hornig and Katharina Menke. Herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort zur deutschen Ausgabe versehen von Stefan Zimmer — Frankfurt am Main, New York: Campus Verlag; Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de L'Homme 1993 (537 p.) ISBN 3-593-34453-X (cloth) DM 128.00.

Thanks to the Foundation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme the French way of thinking receives its due attention among German undergraduates. Among the translations of scientific books, there is now a bold and stimulating work: 24 years after this last masterpiece of Benveniste (few months after publication of the two volumes in 1969 a stroke paralyzed him and robbed him of his voice), years after (1973) an English and (1976) an Italian version. Benveniste did not aim at (re-)constructing the original *Indogermanen* (like Dumézil tried with his tri-functionalism), but rather at comparing historical institutions. Instead of etymological guesswork to a romantic unity before history, he stressed differences in the historical Indo-European cultures. The comparative point of view would give profile to any culture, concerning religion p. 433-518 (The other chapters deal with the economy 19-159, with kinship terminology 160-217, society 218-296, with kingship 299-368, law 369-432, religion).

The introduction by the editor gives some valuable hints, but no substantive discussion. As a companion one refers best to Wolfgang Meid (ed.): *Studien zum Indogermanischen Wortschatz*. Innsbruck 1987 with Zimmer's paper (p. 315-326) concerning Benveniste's reconstruction of IE society and Edgar Polomé: *Der indo-germanische Wortschatz auf dem Gebiete der Religion* (p. 201-217). One regrets that Benveniste's views of the peculiar tradition of the scientific and political implications of "Indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft" are not discussed.

The translation is readable. The transliteration of Greek »y« by »u«, following French traditions, is unusual (*asulos* instead of *asylos*). One mistake, however, is inexcusable: There is no index (originally 55 pages for things, words and *index locorum*). So one gets a treasure of words (*Wort-*

schatz) worth readable, but no clue to reopen and to find the diamond, you are looking for.

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JAN ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. München: C.H. Beck 1992 (344 p.) ISBN 3-406-36088-2 (cloth) DM 68.00

This highly interesting book explores the connection between memory (“knowledge of the past”), identity (“political imagination”) and cultural continuity (“the making of tradition”) (p. 16). The first part of the book gives a cultural theory of collective remembrance. The theoretical discussion results from a co-formulation between two scientists: Jan and Aleida Assmann. It is important to mention that A. Assmann applied the same theory to cultural remembering in early Europe.¹ In the book reviewed here J. Assmann gives his interpretation of the theoretical debate and applies it to three case-studies taken from the ancient Middle-East in the second part of the book. Here he describes the different ways in which a collective picture of the past came into being in Egypt, Israel and Greece and sets them in relation to the development of a national identity in these countries.

How do societies remember and how do they picture themselves while remembering? The means are found in what the author calls “the outdoor dimension of human remembrance” (19). This is expressed through three common tools of remembrance. These are: “mimetic remembrance”, which takes place through repetition of what one sees; “memory of things”: streets and houses, furniture and household-objects may ‘hold on’ to scenes of the past and function as a ‘reminder’; and “communicative remembrance”, which can be found in language and the different forms of communication (20-1). When mime becomes ritual and things become symbols, one may speak of a cultural (common, collective, social) remembrance. The interest of the author lays meanwhile with the third transformation: what happens when communicative remembrance becomes the form of written documents? According to his theory, the written word has inescapable implications and eventually forms a canon, a list of books or other related documents. Once this list is closed it lays open to interpreta-

tion. Here hermeneutics comes into play and dominates cultural remembrance. It is in fact the focus of the book.

For historians of religion J. and A. Assmann offer some significant insights. They suggest cultural remembrance is not a mere metaphor but concentrate on remembrance as a social phenomenon. They focus on excluding and forgetting, as well as the process of choosing 'facts' and the 'making' of tradition. In doing so, they show the direction in which for instance 'tradition' could be studied as part of a dynamics process. The book also makes a clear distinction between culture and religion and their impact on ethnic identity (152-160). As unsatisfying as this solution in part may be, the theory offered here does in fact give possibilities to questions the way religion comes into being and illuminates the social forces which emanate from it. A particularly interesting notion which needs further consideration is whether the canon really formed the core of cultural remembering in literate societies in the ancient Middle East. Referencing Assmann's conclusions to my observances on collective remembering in Mesopotamia² some incongruencies came to light. At least the balance between mimetic, object and written remembrance seems to have been thoroughly different. The formation of a canon and an ensuing culture of explanation were forms of relating to the past Mesopotamians did not particularly care for.

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¹ A. Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume. Zur kulturellen Konstruktion von Zeit und Identität* (in print).

² G. Jonker, *Die Topographie der Erinnerung. Tote, Tradition und kollektives Gedächtnis in Mesopotamien* (forthcoming).

TAMARA M. GREEN, *The City of the Moon God. Religious Traditions of Harran.* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, vol. 14) Leiden, New York, Köln: E.J. Brill 1992 (232 p.) ISBN 9004-09513-6 (cloth) \$63.00

In many ways the study of ancient Near Eastern culture and religion is a fascinating enterprise, especially if it incites the coverage of a wide range of time. The immediate cause of this study is the reference to the people of Harran as Sabians, one of the 'peoples of the book', that is found in the Qur'an and early Islamic sources. The Sabians, in turn, are mentioned in the same breath with e.g. Christians and Jews, entailing

that, in contrast to mere pagans, they are granted a number of privileges by their Muslim overlords. Nevertheless, the term 'Sabians' remains very obscure. In order to uncover the 'mystery', the author focuses on the city of Harran which is located at about 25 miles southeast of Edessa (modern Urfa in Turkey). References to Harran appear in a great variety of documents from about 2000 BC onwards. During this long period of time the Near East was visited, for military reasons or otherwise, by peoples of very different origin; Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Parthians, Arabs, Romans, they all left their cultural mark in the area, including Harran. By interpreting extant traditions and incorporating them into their own cultural inheritance, each of these peoples added something so as to make up a many-stranded and poly-interpretable cultural realm that characterized the area at the time of the Muslim conquest. With great acumen the author manages both to unravel many of these strands as well as to indicate at various points in what way very different traditions may have been interwoven. Sin, the Moon God, started out as the divine ruler of Harran, but on account of his oracular and other qualities made his way into many a tradition, e.g. the Hermetic, that attached itself to the city in the course of time. From this perspective an attempt is made to provide some pre-Islamic meaning to the enigmatic term 'Sabian'. In addition, the use of this term in very diverse Islamic traditions is examined. Although now and again the argument is rather concise and may be supplemented, this study unquestionably adds to our understanding of ancient Near Eastern culture in general and that of Harran in particular.

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FABIO MORA, *Prosopografia Isiaca. 1: Corpus prosopographicum religionis Isiacae. 2: Prosopografia storia e statistica del culto Isiaco. Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain* 113. Leiden: Brill 1990 (XXII, 526 p.; XI, 169 p.)¹

Using or producing prosopographical material is an activity which every historian of classical antiquity is familiar with. However, this is far from the truth for historians of religions. For instance, a lot of work has been done on the prosopography of Roman priests but it is guided by political- and sociohistorical interests. Consequently, it is usually limited to the higher echelons of official priesthoods.² In contrast, Mora's *Pro-*

sopografia Isiaca does not only list and identify the cultic charges but also the devotees and sometime adherents of Isis and related gods throughout the Mediterranean outside Egypt. This is a massive and (as far as I have discovered) thorough enterprise, amounting to some 3,000 names.³ Even within the monumental series of the “preliminary studies on oriental religions in the Roman Empire” (*EPRO*) is it a novelty. Nevertheless, there are many pieces of scholarship which have been used, especially the collection of Isiac inscriptions by Vidman, Baslez’ prosopographical material for Delos, and Malaise’s collection of sources and condensed prosopographical records for Italy.⁴

According to geographical criteria, Mora arranges his material in six parts: Delos (1,084 entries, mostly named persons, some anonymous), the Greek-speaking orient (1,415), Italy (403), the Danubian (115) and western provinces (79), and Africa (54). In each part the persons are listed in alphabetical order, the headline giving name and sex. The preceding current number indicates with italics, bold types, and brackets the relation of the person towards the cult—cultic charges, members of associations, dedicators—and the degree of probability of these data. The entry lists and paraphrases the relevant sources, offers a dating and tries to establish relations with other persons. Since in most cases a person is referred to by only one (and frequently short) inscription, the articles usually comprise only a few lines. Each part contains many useful indices: names, (ethnic) origins, sex, chronological and geographical indices, goddesses/gods, religious charges and lists of persons (and their positions) who are named in the sources without being involved in the worship of Isis (parents, governours etc.). Sometimes indices for specific types of sources prevailing in the area are given: documents of manumissions, membership lists. There are, however, no cumulative indices covering all regions.

If criticism should be expressed, I should not argue about a small number of divergent interpretations. It might be more useful to reflect on some basic difficulties in the formal arrangement that each prosopography faces and must tackle afresh. Considering the few instances of kinship indicated by identical names, the alphabetical order is fairly useless. It could easily be replaced by an index, whereas it would be a major undertaking to reconstruct local or temporal groups on the basis of indices. The current number—now without any significance—could encode basic geographical data (e.g. numbers starting with “1” for Delos, “2” for Greece and so on) and would render a cumulative index a useful instrument even for geographically specified interests. Divinities and religious functions should be indexed in their Greek or Latin form. The Italian paraphrases of the inscriptions are helpful in combining precise informa-

tion on the person and description of the underlying source. However, one is consequently led to believe that Latin words or phrases are quotations, which often enough is not true.

With such a range of prosopographical material Mora poses the question as to how useful a prosopographical approach towards single cults in the ancient world might be. In a second, much smaller volume, he offers some answers.

Mora deals with the participation of women in the cult and the role of other divinities for the worship, analyses three hymns, and follows the cult in Rome up to the end of the first century A.D. These topics are not new.⁵ The discussion demonstrates the author's familiarity with the sources far beyond the inscriptions, and the conclusions are judicious. Judged by the integration of the prosopographical data, however, the analyses are disappointing. It is a significant sign that the index of personal names (all forms now Italian) does not refer—by number or else—to the prosopography. The analysis of the aretalogies and the history of the Roman cult is pursued without any reference to the prosopographical material and is exclusively based on literary evidence. The other parts remain descriptive. Diversity and specific developments are shown, but any attempt at explanation is missing.

Some general problems should be pointed out, which illustrate the dangers and potentials of a prosopographical approach. Firstly, any statistical operation presupposes a comprehensive critique of the transmission of the (epigraphic) data, thereby establishing (hypothetical) rules to transfer observations of the sample—the persons mentioned in the existing sources—to the parent population, the sum of the participants. Such a critique is usually missing.⁶ The proposed line of enquiry demands allowances for regional differences in the sources and the establishment of a typology of genres, which is exceeding the categories usually applied.

In his criticism of P. Lampe's⁷ sociological analysis of the early Christian community in Rome, G. Schöllgen proposes elements of a typology for some literary genres.⁸ This is necessary for inscriptions, too.⁹ Schöllgen (like Lampe) argues for a local starting point for any sociological analysis. The sources available for the cult of Isis are even better than the early Christian ones but they have to be used adequately. Given the vast differences of the local societies in places like Delos, Athens or Rome, the comparisons of percentages of female participants do not have any significance. Starting with the prosopographical material of a single place, one would like to ask for women's share in membership lists and dedications, among dedicants, ordinary members (*cultores*), initiates and priests. To what degree are sex and (or) social status criteria for filling

the religious hierarchy? Are priests known by their own dedications or are they honored by inscriptions of the Isiacs? What are the local epigraphical habits of women in other contexts?—The sources do not yield answers to each question everywhere. Probably, a complete picture is impossible. Mora's prosopography might help to choose the best places for analyses.

Another fundamental problem is indicated by Mora's marking system in the first volume, but not fully realized in the second. Of course it is entirely misleading to interpret the *Prosopographia Isiaca* as a membership list. If there is a core of devotees—as suggested by Apuleius' description (book XI of the *Metamorphoses*)—its border runs far within the prosopography and can hardly be ascertained. Only on the basis of a comprehensive local study would it be possible to answer questions concerning polytheistic structures of worship and the exclusiveness of cults. The same holds true for the study of divine associations in documents of worship. Within the framework of classical polytheism, these are first of all traits in a history of forms and socially organized local or even individual religions. Only on a secondary level should they be related to documents of systematic reflection.

The *Corpus prosopographicum religionis Isiacae* is a major instrument for the ongoing research in classical religions. The accompanying volume does not diminish this achievement, but neither does it extend the range of prosopographical methods. Ironically, the application of mass data and quantitative methods forces the historian of religion to clarify her or his qualitative concepts and questions, thus furthering systematic research. In order to validate the mass data of the prosopographical "metasources"¹⁰ the philological basis has to be strengthened: The study of the *prima vista* scrawny inscriptions as religious texts would not be the smallest result in using prosopography in the history of religions.

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¹ I would like to thank Miss Katja Meußler and Prof. Hubert Cancik for reading this review.

² Notable exceptions are the dissertation of George Howe (*Fasti sacerdotum p. R. publicorum aetatis imperatoriae*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1904), guided by Georg Wissowa, and the recent publications on the *fratres Arvales* by John Scheid.

³ Mora even includes persons whose names are totally destroyed in the inscriptions. Isiacs who are attested in literary sources only seem to be excluded, e.g. the emperor Otho, whose devotion is amply reported (s. Mora 2, 106-7). Other

emperors are repeatedly named in several parts (Caracalla, Septimius Severus), depending on the find spots of the inscriptions.

⁴ Ladislaus Vidman, *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiac et Sarapiacae* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 28), Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969; Marie-Françoise Baslez, *Recherches sur les conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des religions orientales à Délos*, Paris 1977; Michel Malaise, *Inventaire préliminaire des documents égyptiens découverts en Italie* (EPRO 21), Leiden: Brill, 1972.

⁵ E.g. Sharon Kelly Heyob, *The Cult of Isis Among Women in the Graeco-Roman World* (EPRO 51), Leiden: Brill, 1975.

⁶ Another problem concerns the clarity of presentation, an advantage of Mora's *opus*. His tables are very clear except the analysis of covariances (appendix), which is insufficient in the graphs as well as in the textual description of the method.

⁷ *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten* (WUNT 2, 18), Tübingen: Mohr, 1987 (2nd ed. 1989).

⁸ "Probleme der frühchristlichen Sozialgeschichte: Einwände gegen Peter Lampes Buch 'Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten'", *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 32 (1989), 23-40; he demonstrates the limits of social history in *Ecclesia sordida? Zur Frage der sozialen Schichtung frühchristlicher Gemeinden am Beispiel Karthagos zur Zeit Tertullians* (Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Suppl. 13), Münster: Aschendorff, 1985.

⁹ Cf. Iiro Kajanto, *Onomastic Studies in the Early Christian Inscriptions of Rome and Carthage* (Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 2,1), Helsinki 1963, for the sociological analysis.

¹⁰ S. Jean Maurin, "La prosopographie romaine: Pertes et profits", *Annales (ESC)* 37 (1982), 828.

MARY BOYCE and FRANTZ GRENET, *A History of Zoroastrianism*. Vol. 3: *Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman Rule*. With a Contribution by Roger Beck — Leiden: E. J. Brill 1991 (XIX + 594 p.) ISBN 90-04-09271-4 FL 300,—

The volume under review covers the period from the fourth century B.C. to the fourth century A.C. and the geographical area of the spread of Zoroastrianism outside proper Iran. This spread results from the break-up of the unifying empire of Alexander the Great; since then Zoroastrians lived under the hegemony of mainly non-Zoroastrian kings with the only noteworthy exceptions in the Atropatene, in Armenia, Pontos and the Commagene (cf. 22). In lands with ancient Iranian habitation they usually stuck to their traditions but one can also see some innovations (cf. 62-68): In the Seleucid Empire Herakles and the *yazata* Verethaghna mingled with each other; the rise of this *yazata* who later became famous as Wahram began at that time. Other *yazatas* like Anahit or Mithra also gained position and divinity in this time. Another innovation to be mentioned is the growing importance of ritual purity in order to protect and separate oneself from non-Zoroastrians aliens. In eastern Iran

Zoroastrianism did not only make its contributions to the rise of Mahayana-Buddhism (cf. 148sq.) but the god Oxus was also incorporated in the Zoroastrian pantheon of Bactria. On the other hand Anahit could not reach the same popularity there as she gained in the west (cf. 187sq.) where other goddesses like Nanaia or Aši had been absorbed by her. In the non-Iranian lands of the former Achaemenid Empire we face a little bit different situation: Since the reign of Artaxerxes II. there had been a continuous Zoroastrian influence on these countries which lasted till the Roman period; sources from the fourth century A.C. show that it was Zurvanism which still flourished in Asia Minor at that time (cf. 278sq. 307sq.). In the Commagene Antiochus's new cult has also deeply been rooted in Iranian ideas which was performed by hellenized *magoi* (cf. 329-335). The most important parts of the book under review are—in the opinion of the present reviewer—the chapter on Zoroastrian contribution to eastern Mediterranean religion and thought in Greco-Roman world (cf. 491-565). M. Boyce stresses (cf. 367) that among all the peoples of the Achaemenian and Alexandrian empire it seems to be the Jews (and thus consequently later on the Christians) who appear to have absorbed most from Zoroastrianism. The rise of apocalypticism after Alexander's conquest of Iran is just one example which shows the contact between Zoroastrian and Jewish thought; in detail Boyce discusses e.g. the Oracles of Hystaspes, the Sybilline Books, and different intertestamental writings. Also noteworthy are her conclusions (cf. 462sq.) that there is only an indirect Zoroastrian influence on early Gnosticism and that Gnosis—via Manichaeism—influenced Iranian thought again since the third century. Also the Zoroastrian pseudepigrapha are discussed thus continuing the work of J. Bidez and F. Cumont (*Les mages hellénisés*, 2 vols, Paris 1938); but Boyce's conclusions about this topic are new (cf. 564sq.): There are only very limited connections between Zoroaster and these pseudepigraphical texts (with the maybe noteworthy exception of Dio Chrysostom's Hymns of the Magi) so that we have to conclude that the knowledge about Zoroastrianism in the Hellenistic world was more limited than Bidez and Cumont had supposed. For the historian of religions this leads to the result that a history of Zoroastrianism must not rely too trustfully on these Greek and Latin pseudepigraphical sources; but at the same time these sources tell the historian how people in the Hellenistic and Roman era imagined this religion.

The book under review covers nearly eight hundred years of Iranian religion outside Iran. It may be hoped that the promised corresponding volume about Zoroastrianism in proper Iran during the same period can

be published in reasonable time. But even now historians of religions, scholars in the field of Iranian studies, Central Asia and Classical antiquity are deeply indebted to the authors for this book.

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MANFRED HUTTER

MANFRED HUTTER, *Manis kosmogonische Šābuhragān-Texte. Edition, Kommentar und literaturgeschichtliche Einordnung der manichäisch-mittelpersischen Handschriften M 98/99 I und M 7980-7984*. (Studies in Oriental Religions 21)—Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz 1992 (IX + 175 p.) ISBN 3-447-03227-8 (paper) DM 98.00

The Middle Persian Šābuhragān is an important work of Mani (214-276/7), the founder of the Manichaean religion, written in order to convert the founder of the dynasty of the Sasanids, Šābuhr I, to his religion. As the *ipsissima vox* of Mani, this text has special importance. Manfred Hutter (A-Graz), a scholar in Iranian studies, now presents a new edition of the texts preserved; they are probably parts of this holy literature of eastern Manichaeism. In the beginning of Hutter's work we find an introduction to the *status quaestionis*, which is short and to the point. His intent is to close gaps mainly in the philological study of these texts. The edition uses a transliteration. Those who wish to gain an impression of the manuscripts themselves will find facsimiles of some folios appended. The footnotes offer variant readings of manuscripts or of former editions and explain difficulties in understanding the text. The following, mainly linguistic comment deals with difficult terms showing parallels in other languages and other Manichaean texts. Hence the edition, the comments and the extensive additional glossary are interesting not only for philologically oriented Iranian scholars. Especially the effort to present variant readings in keeping with the latest developments of research, makes Hutter's study indispensable for everyone who deals with the original sources of Manichaeism. The main results of this study are decisive for Manichaean studies on the whole. The author shows that the fragments M 98/99 I und M 7980-7984, which contain Mani's cosmogonic myth, most probably belong to the Šābuhragān, and he helps us in coming close to the reconstruction of the work. Further results of his edition include light shed on the connection between the Manichaean and the Enochic literature. Hutter finishes his study with a chapter on the

dissemination of the Šābuhragān in Asian Manichaeism. Thus the author presents a work of importance.

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OLIVIER ABEL and FRANÇOISE SMYTH (Eds.), *Le livre de traverse: de l'exégèse biblique à l'anthropologie*. Preface by Marcel Detienne. Paris: Editions du Cerf 1992 (291 p.) ISBN 2-204-04700-7 (paper) FF 135.00

If I were to write a novel on contemporary biblical studies, the present book would get its own chapter. I would describe secret meetings at the Institute of Protestant Theology in Paris (Bouvelard Arago), about misty Monday mornings (which is the time scholars meet), the leadership of a quite distinguished lady—Françoise Smyth-Florentin—, and the international as well as interdisciplinary nature of the Smyth lodge. One of the products of these meetings is the *Livre de traverse*, and it reveals something I would almost certainly refer to as the “Paris conspiracy”. Among the fourteen papers two by Bernd Joerg Diebner and one by Jean Lambert are perhaps the most characteristic ones in that they partly demonstrate, partly prepare the reader for something like a revolution which biblical studies have not seen in a long time. Diebner shows that the Joseph story in the book of Genesis, far from being a product of the tenth-century Solomonic Enlightenment, is presumably a postexilic novel reflecting concerns of Egyptian diaspora Judaism (“Le roman de Joseph, ou Israël en Egypte”). In another contribution to the volume, Diebner presents his controversial views on the formation of the Hebrew Bible in the hellenistic period and expresses his skepticism about traditional views that date the beginnings of the canon to a much earlier period (“Entre Israël et Israël, le Canon”). A radicalism similar to that voiced by Diebner can be seen in Jean Lambert’s long essay on the story of Susanna and the Elders (“La Dame et les Jumeaux”). He shows that commentators have missed much in not taking into account the rather surprising parallel story in the third part of the Mahābhārata. Like the Nāsatya twins, the two elders fall in love with a beautiful woman. Lambert explores the implications of a story common to an Indo-European and a Semitic tradition and indicates how monotheism abandons the “tripartite” model of social and mythic organization discovered by Georges Dumézil. It is our hope that, despite

its origin in a somewhat esoteric "lodge", the book will be widely read and discussed inside and outside of the biblical guild.

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BERNARD LEWIS and FRIEDRICH NIEWÖHNER (Eds.), *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter*. (Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien, 4) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1992 (388 p.) ISBN 3-447-03349-5 (paper) DM 148.00

These are the proceedings of the 25th Wolfenbüttel symposium, held from 11th-15th June 1989, which was devoted to the subject of "Religious disputations in the Middle Ages". The 21 contributions, preceded by a preface of the editors and followed by the public lecture delivered during the symposium by Lewis (*The other and the enemy: perceptions of identity and difference in Islam*) have been divided into three, partially overlapping groups. The *first* of these (pp. 11-167) contains 3 articles on inner-Jewish discussions and 6 on Christian-Jewish or Jewish-Christian disputations. All of these took place in Europe. The contribution of Jeremy Cohen, *Towards a functional classification of Jewish anti-Christian polemic in the High Middle Ages*, is of special importance for the solving of problems connected with periodization and classification.

The *second group* (pp. 169-323) contains one article on an inner-Christian discussion, together with 8 other contributions. Of these 6 are dealing with Christian-Muslim and 1 with Muslim-Christian discussions and dialogues. The localities of these discussions vary from Europe (3 articles) to the Muslim world (2 articles). Some of them (4) however, involve an international exchange of thought between both worlds. The most outstanding example of these is the study of Emmanuel Sivan, *Islam and the Crusades: Antagonism, polemics, dialogue* with many interesting data derived from Arabic sources.

The *third group* (pp. 325-369) contains one study of an inner-Islamic dispute, 1 article on a Muslim-Jewish disputation and 1, by Niewöhner, on the famous comparative study of the three religions by the late 13th century Baghdadi author of Jewish extraction, Ibn Kammūna, with due reference to the edition and translation of this work by Moshe Perlmann (1967 and 1971). To illustrate the climate of interreligious disputations prevailing in Baghdad at the end of the 13th century, the author quotes a long eyewitness-report of an Andalusian Muslim said to have visited the

city at the time. His source for this report is Von Kremer's book, *Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen des Islams*, of 1868. In reality, however, this report goes back to the late 10th century. Its original source is the Andalusian biographical dictionary of Ibn Hazm's student Al-Humaydī, *Jadhwat al-muqtabis* (ed. Al-Tanjī, Cairo 1371 H, pp. 101-102).

The coverage of the subject in this volume is, of course, not complete. Neither is it representative. Thus, the wealthy Muslim literature concerning Christianity has remained underexposed.

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DAMIEN KEOWN, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press 1992 (XI, 269 p.) ISBN 0-333-55363-6 (hardcover) £40.00

This study is addressed primarily to scholars in the field of Buddhist studies. Within this context, it seeks to redirect Buddhist studies first, by addressing the issues of Buddhist ethics in a comprehensive and systematic manner—something that has yet to be attempted. Second, it intends to reinterpret the place of ethics within Buddhist thought, particularly in relationship to soteriology. It seeks to go beyond mere description by putting forth the thesis that *sīla* (morality) in the Buddhist system goes hand in hand with *pañña* (wisdom) and is not only a means toward the realization of *nibbāna*, but is intrinsic to it. This means that, contrary to Winston King (*In the Hope of Nibbana*) and others, that *sīla* is not left behind by the *Arahat*, but is in fact perfected.

This thesis is supported by a careful analysis of selected texts and by a reinterpretation of the parable of the raft so that one need not draw from it that in *nibbāna*, *dhamma* is left behind. It is also held that the Buddha himself was not seen as someone who left *sīla* behind, but who embodied its perfection.

Since it is Keown's intention to treat the study of Buddhist ethics in a "holistic" manner, he regrets that very little has been done on Mahayana ethics—scholars who have addressed ethical issues at all seem to have concentrated on the *Pali Canon*. The chapter devoted to Mahayana ethics, while insightful, is only a first step in that direction. Since this is a study in "Buddhist ethics," although some attention is given to diversity within the tradition, the diversity gives way to a basic unity. Not only are certain

texts allowed to speak for "Buddhism," but the example of the Buddha taken from accounts of his life is seen as offering insights into the meaning of texts, and commentators are taken as valid interpreters of texts without raising the issue of historical change and the possibility that the commentary, if not a novel point of view, is at least a significant change or progression that may or may not have been intended by the original author of the text.

If this work is addressed primarily to those engaged in Buddhist studies, it is also a foray into religious ethics and more particularly comparative religious ethics. As such, it includes two chapters assessing the similarities and differences between Buddhism and utilitarianism and Aristotelianism. It is held that not only will our understanding of Buddhist ethics be assisted by placing it in a [Western] scheme or framework, but the author embraces the position of I.B. Horner that for a European scholar who proposes to understand "Oriental religion," "a considerable knowledge of Christian doctrine and history, and of its Greek background, is almost indispensable" (21). This is as convincing as to hold that an Asian scholar cannot understand Mills or Bentham or Aristotle without first studying the *Pali Canon*!

Keown has offered a stimulating discussion of some basic issues in Buddhist ethics. The book is never dull and usually provocative. Whether or not one finds his arguments convincing, this is a work that merits careful study and serious attention by Buddhologists and ethicists alike.

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JAN NATTIER, *Once Upon a Future Time. Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline*. (Studies in Asian Religions) Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press 1992 (318 p.) ISBN 089581-925-2 (cloth); ISBN 089581-926-0 (pbk.)

A phenomenon that has struck scholars of Buddhism from the very beginning is the prophecy found in many Buddhist texts about the eventual disappearance of the Dharma, a prophecy that is often described with details of the circumstances before and during the decline and demise as well as provides calculations and periods of the Dharma's duration, from 500 years in the earlier traditions of the Theravāda texts, too 700, 1000 etc. to 10.000 and beyond. Nattier discusses these traditions and the timetables they offer in ch. 2 and 3 of Part I of her study.

In Part I, ch. 4-6 she discusses the East-Asian system which distinguishes three phases: (in Chinese) Cheng-fa (Skt. Saddharma) Hsiang-fa (Skt. Saddharmapratirūpaka) and Mo-fa ('final Dharma'). Her extensive knowledge of the Buddhist sources makes it possible for her to discuss in detail the problems surrounding the translation of these (and other) terms and to prove convincingly an East Asian origin of this three-period system.

Interesting for the historian of religions is her argumentation against the Western view that Buddhists, or Indian religions in general, lack a sense of history. Both the cosmological and the buddhological 'historical' traditions emerge from a sense of time and of history—including the history of one's own religion—as transitory and in constant flux.

Part II discusses in detail the various versions of the 'Kauśāmbī Story', a prophecy probably based on the memory of invasions of Greek, Śākan and Persian kings. After the defeat of the foreign powers, conflict within the community leads to violence, which brings the Dharma to an end. The origin and transmission of the story in all available 13 recensions in Chinese, Khotanese and Tibetan are discussed in ch. 8, a scholarly tour de force which offers a clear model for further, similar, textual research.

With this book Jan Nattier places herself in the line of some of the greatest scholars of Buddhism, for whom a profound and extensive knowledge of the Buddhist texts in their various languages and historical traditions is the basis for a clear and convincing study of the development of Buddhist ideas.

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FRANCIS X. CLOONEY S.J., *Thinking Ritually. Rediscovering the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini*. (Publications of the De Nobili Research Institute, vol. XVII) Vienna: Institute for Indology, University of Vienna 1990 (293 p.) ISBN 3-900-271-21-6

This interesting, but highly technical study is devoted to the initial phase of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā school, an ancient Indian school of thought, centering on sacrificial ritual. Its author tries to "retrieve" its basic text, the Sūtra of Jaimini (4th-2nd century BCE), as a system of thought, from its later explanations. The Sūtra is notoriously difficult to read and for this

reason it has been interpreted with the help of later commentaries (*bhāṣyas*), especially that of Śābara. Clooney observes that this approach has failed to sufficiently discriminate between the many stages of development in the intellectual history of Mīmāṃsā. It is his aim, therefore, to study the earliest Mīmāṃsā text in terms of the questions it imposes on us when we approach it. The book is divided into two parts: I Deciphering the System of the Sūtras (Chapters 1-3) and II The Meaning and Context of Jaimini's System (Chapters 4-7).

Ch. 1 gives a survey of Mīmāṃsā studies under three points of view: the material as a) a school of exegesis, b) a school of philosophy and c) a theory of sacrifice. In discussion with various scholars Clooney argues that the early Mīmāṃsā can only be properly understood if the explanation of the entire text of Jaimini is taken as a starting-point, and not just its first section dealing with the more general and philosophical topics, as is often done.

Ch. 2 analyses the structure of the Sūtra. Clooney observes that Jaimini uses a consistent method of description and argument in dealing with specific issues. The text has a plan and precision greater than might have been initially expected. It exemplifies a kind of style and thought "in between" those of the sacrificial Śrauta Sūtras and the philosophical Darśana Sūtras. The perception of the Sūtras as a system of rules and relationships oriented to action and event enables Clooney to compare Mīmāṃsā with modern legal reasoning.

Ch. 3 is devoted to the so-called "structural vocabulary" or the "key-terms" of the Sūtras, the words used everywhere in the text to make explicit the structures of sacrificial reasoning. The analysis of these terms enables the author to grasp the distinctive character of the text. Clooney shows that Jaimini has constructed a complex descriptive framework, in which every ritual component can be located and properly handled. The importance of his system becomes clear, if one bears in mind that in ancient India the sacrifice is regarded as a microcosm, wherein the reality of the universe is presented in a pure, intense form. This organisation by Jaimini around the sacrifice also implies the structuring of the universe depending on the sacrifice.

Ch. 4 deals with the question for what reason the structure of Sūtras is developed by Jaimini, and focuses on *dharma* and "sacrifice" (*yajña*) and their interrelationship. Clooney discusses the distinction between ordinary and Vedic experience and language. He stresses the fact that in Jaimini's opinion the sacrifice remains rooted in ordinary experience. As it satisfies human desires, it is something that people can relate to and want to become involved in, but this is not the complete evaluation. Once

a man has undertaken the sacrifice, the action is however no longer governed by his viewpoint and desires. He himself is now part of a larger event not totally dependent on him; for this reason he must adjust his perspective to the obligations and calculations of the ultimate perspective on the sacrifice (*yajñārtha*), which is not reducible to what is meaningful to humans. In this context the transcendence of the Vedic realm is introduced. This transcendence “occurs” when the performer finds himself in a world which accounts for his viewpoint without making him the centre of the world. A world in which the sacrifice is central is no longer the world of ordinary experience. Clooney observes that the concept of *dharma* is essential to a proper understanding of the sacrifice. After a careful analysis of its various meanings he stresses its ritual basis. *Dharma* indicates the functional description of a sacrificial element. This knowledge of *dharma* is based on the Veda.

Clooney elaborates the implications of the preceding in ch. 5. He studies the displacement of the human person from the central focus and shows how Jaimini systematically subordinates the person to the sacrificial event. This is exemplified by three “human” issues, viz. the status of the Vedic *ṛṣīs*, the status of the various Vedic schools, and the question of competence (especially that of women and *sūdras*) in matters of sacrifice (*adhikāra*).

Ch. 6 tries to situate Jaimini’s *Mīmāṃsā* in the context of the *Brāhmaṇas* and Buddhism. Clooney argues that at least regarding to the nature of action and transcendence Buddhism stands closer to the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Mīmāṃsā* than to the *Upaniṣads*. He traces the similarities and differences between *Mīmāṃsā* and Buddhism, and concludes that Jaimini is seeking to offer an intelligent alternative to the other systems of its day, a comprehensive worldview generated exclusively from the texts and rituals of the Vedic world.

Ch. 7 deals with the question as to how to explain the *Mīmāṃsā* of Śabara and his successors. What happened when the system became on the one hand more precise and scientific, and on the other hand more difficult to live by? In this context Clooney deals with the difficult *apūrva* doctrine and its developments. *Apūrva* initially was concerned with the connections between words and actions, but in the course of time this concept was elaborated as the transcendent link between actions and their results, a development concurring with the theory that sacrifice exists primarily for the satisfaction of human desires.

The epilogue is devoted to the possibility of writing a more coherent, more precise and therefore more interesting intellectual history of the *Mīmāṃsā*.

Though Clooney directs himself to specialists in the field of Indian philosophy he also deals with several topics of interest to specialists of Indian religions. A minor point of criticism concerns the translation of *varṇa*, i.e. estate, not caste, but this in no way diminishes the merits of the book.

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HENRY CORBIN, *History of Islamic Philosophy*. Translated by Liadain Sherrard with the assistance of Philip Sherrard—London, New York: Kegan Paul International, in association with Islamic Publications for the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London 1993 (XVIII + 445 p.) ISBN 0-7103-0416-1 (cloth) £ 55.00.

Henry Corbin who died in 1978 was an eminent French orientalist of this century. His major field was Shiite philosophy and theology, in particular Ismaili and Twelver Shiite thinking. He edited numerous Arabic and Persian texts and made these ideas known to both, the Muslims of Iran and the Near East as well as to Western Scholars. On the basis of this wide range of knowledge he was qualified to draw special attention to sufi and shiite thoughts and included them into his presentation of Islamic philosophy, systematically presented in his works *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (2 vols.) and *En Islam iranien* (4 vols.), the latter being mainly a collection of master texts in French translation while the former is a systematical presentation of Islamic philosophy where sufi and shiite views are given large space.

It was, consequently, a good idea to translate this *History of Islamic Philosophy*, though originally published in 1964 already, into English and to make it thus also accessible to all those who are unable to read the French edition of the book. As concerns the quality of the translation, occasional tests prove it to be trustworthy. Moreover, it is important to add that more recent publications have been included in the Elements of Bibliography. This applies not only to publications in English and French but also to authors as Ritter, Meier, and Gramlich whose works are in German.

Thanks to this translation, one of the most important pioneer works in Islamic philosophy, including sufi and shiite philosophies, can, from now onwards, be taken into consideration in the English speaking world. May

the great influence it had on studies of Islam in France, have a parallel in its new language context!

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ESTHER JACOBSON, *The Deer Goddess of Ancient Siberia. A Study in the Ecology of Belief*. (NUMEN Supplements, edited by H.G. Kippenberg and E.T. Lawson, vol. 55) Leiden, New York, Köln: E.J. Brill 1993 (XVI, 291 p.) ISBN 90-04-09628-0 (cloth) \$80.00

The reader of Esther Jacobson's book is torn between two reactions. On the one hand, this is a magnificent contribution to a poorly known area of research, the prehistoric religions of Southern Siberia and Northern Central Asia. We have here a very good and learned synthesis of a wide archaeological area, seen from the religio-historical point of view. On the other hand we are presented with an orientation of religious development which, at least to this reviewer, seems too audacious.

The author tries to prove that the well-known deer myth from different parts of Siberia—the main figure is often also described as a cosmic elk (moose)—reveals a manifestation of the grand mistress of the animals, the animal mother, who in her turn is an aspect of the great Mother Goddess. The trouble is that our sources are a mute archaeological material, occasionally supplemented by recent ethnographical records. Furthermore, the author accumulates material from different places to reconstruct a logic of sequences in symbolic expressions which to her signify changes in religious meaning. The end product is both a simplistic and complicated evolutionary process where the Great Mother from the beginning stands for world domination, creation (father creators are supposed to be younger figures), protection of humans and animals, guardianship of the dead, and so on. Cultural differentiation, contact between different cultures and varying ecological situations produce a splitting up of this archaic goddess into divers spirits, at the same time as new religio-magical systems enter the scene: shamanism (with its close association to animal mothers), beliefs in natural spirits like mountain spirits, the "totemic" bear cult, the belief complex around the world tree, and so on. I admire the author's great ingenuity and control of the material, but question her evolutionary scheme which actually has profited from the antiquated Soviet evolutionism and matriarchal focus (unless modern feministic trends here play the game).

However, let me point out that, if we disregard the author's evolutionary reconstructions, this is a most important work, a valuable introduction to South Siberian religions. It is a must for every student who wants to pave his/her way into this extremely difficult, but fascinating area of research. And Esther Jacobson has certainly made this area more fascinating than before.

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HENRY PERNET, *Ritual Masks: Deceptions and Revelations*. (Translated by Laura Grillo) – Columbia: University of South Carolina Press 1992 (201 pp.; 17 black and white pictures and drawings) ISBN 0-87249793-3 (cloth) \$ 29.95

At first hand the title of this book suggested to me that I had to do with an old-fashioned exercise in comparative religion or, perhaps, ethno-psychology. In fact the author does nothing else than demonstrate the impossibility of making general statements on "the" ritual mask and its wearer. He achieves this end, not by a theoretical discussion of the principles and methods of religious anthropology, but by demonstrating that a series of classical general assumptions on ritual masks are as such simply not true.

Passing in review the most widespread of these assumptions one becomes aware of the fact that some of them have a very tenacious life indeed for the "contemporary civilized adult" (p. 159). Pernet is not fighting windmills when he demonstrates that these assumptions are undue generalisations. The first of these is the "white man's myth" that the ritual mask is universal. The author shows that "there is no general model explaining why some societies have masks and others do not" (p. 160). As a general rule masks do not represent spirits, let alone spirits of the dead and the wearer is not simply supposed to become that spirit. The ritual mask is not always used by its wearer to liberate his instincts or to escape from himself: "the ritual mask stems more from the notion of service rather than from liberation" (p. 162). Finally Pernet squares accounts with the theory that links ritual masks to the existence of male secret societies as a means to seize and maintain the power that women held in the times of mythical matriarchy. Pernet argues that early matriarchy is an unproven and unlikely hypothesis and that women are not "terrorized" by ritual masks because they are credulous and ignorant. "The profound meaning of masked rituals can only be perceived by

acknowledging that everyone's behaviour in them is meaningful, the women's as well as the men's" (p. 163).

The book is a translation of the French original from 1988 (*Mirages du masque*, Genova: Labor and Fides) and I hope this English edition will assure it an even wider audience.

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BARBARA VON REIBNITZ, *Ein Kommentar zu Friedrich Nietzsche "Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik" (Kapitel 1-12)*—Stuttgart, Weimar, Verlag J. B. Metzler 1992 (414 p.) ISBN 3-476-00832-0 (hardcover) DM 68.00.

With her dissertation presented to the Cultural Studies Faculty at the University of Tübingen in 1989, which has now been published by Metzler, Barbara von Reibnitz has created a standard work in the form of a commentary on Nietzsche's <Geburt der Tragödie>. Its focal point centres around those parts of GT (Chaps. 1-15 and Chaps. 1-12) which are relevant from the point of view of studies of antiquity in the narrower sense, and includes those parts of GT which concern the description or development of the theory of tragedy. This means that the commentary, which uses the Kritische Studienausgabe (KSA) of G. Colli and M. Montinari as the basic text, wants to describe the references, themes and connections from Greek religious, literary and cultural history. This is not only an extensive task, but at the same time one with the highest demands, since Nietzsche's discourse represents a "multi-intentioned work"; on the one hand it tries to introduce antiquity to the Schopenhauer community and to the Wagner circle by means of allusions that are familiar to them, and on the other hand it is aimed at a public consisting of philological experts despite all the (subsequent) declarations to the contrary (however, with the telling restriction that one must be a follower of Schopenhauer in order to be able to gain any new knowledge). This work sees itself, in fact, as a "hermeneutic alternative" to the treatment of ancient sources (texts) known to Nietzsche since his studies at school and university. Above all, however, in GT Nietzsche was interested in providing a "psychology of ancient culture" that can be held up to modern culture as a "model". On this see also the smaller treatise put forward by the author: "Nietzsches <Griechischer Staat> und das Kaiserreich", (in: *Der altsprachliche Unterricht* 32 (1987), especially 78ff.), which also serves as proof that as aesthetic theory GT is also always political and social theory (Windelband's 1878 lecture "Über Friedrich

Hölderlin und sein Geschick'', [in: *Präludien*, Tübingen 1921, Vol. I, 230-259] would be comparable with Nietzsche on this point). Even though when writing GT Nietzsche is able to refer back to earlier works and philological questions, philological knowledge and methodological preconditions which he had learnt during his time at school and as a student—in this respect a densely written, knowledgeable chapter on "The philological preconditions of GT" (pp. 9-35) is placed in front of the actual commentary, which is complemented by a chapter on "The writing of GT" (pp. 36-49) that is just as informative as well. There is also an overview on Nietzsche's working material and preliminary work, which is presented in the appendix—nevertheless, the "study of the sources ... in GT is transposed into the metaphysical, the psychological and the aesthetic" (p. 4), just as, in fact, the numerous references and allusions to the current scientific research and discussion are quite consciously "blurred" by Nietzsche in order to stylize his "theses on <deep> and original views". Thus the commentary "automatically" assumes the difficult task, which is excellently mastered, of reconstructing and revealing these references. In brief: the task of "demysticizing" Nietzsche. With this intention Barbara von Reibnitz follows the tradition of Mazzino Montinari: her work completely fulfills his demand that Nietzsche's "ideal library" should be reconstructed. Her "obligation" to Montinari, which is also covered by Nietzsche's demand for "intellectual honesty", includes the justified criticism of the editorial treatment of the manuscript of "Ursprung und Ziel der Tragödie" (UZ)—in Number UI2—in the KSA (in so far as it exists at all), just as she also rightly criticises the editorially inadequate commentary of the KSA. In the context of GT, Nietzsche's "ideal library" also includes, for example, J. Bernays, Fr. Creuzer, K. O. Müller and Fr. G. Welcker, all of whom are leading representatives of studies of antiquity in the 19th century. In this way the author documents not only that Nietzsche was very well informed about the current discussion concerning classical studies during his day, but at the same time she also provides convincing proof of her impressive competence on the subject. As a side-product the reader profits from the "tough school" of philological training; this is the "first precondition" for the measure of precision and professionalism that are revealed by the form and accomplishment of the interpretation and commentary of the text. In brief: an outstanding scientific achievement and an essential aid for all those who are working on Nietzsche and GT. The "Birth" of a standard commentary from the "Spirit" of classical studies.

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THE MARTYR AS WITNESS
COPTIC AND COPTO-ARABIC HAGIOGRAPHIES AS
MEDIATORS OF RELIGIOUS MEMORY¹

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Summary

This article argues for a novel reading of Coptic and Copto-Arabic hagiographies. Relying on the analysis of Coptic and Copto-Arabic traditions belonging to the Passion of Victor son of Romanos, also known as Victor the General, the author investigates issues concerning the transmission of texts, intertextuality, the dialectics between history and memory and their implications in the articulation of Coptic religious memory. In the present article the body of the martyr is viewed as a text and the memory of bodily experiences transmitted through texts as pertaining to religious memory. The author posits that far from negating his body, the martyr made it the chart of his belief and placed it in the foreground for everybody to see, to hear about and to remember. She explicates that the practices to which the martyr subordinated his body and the experience of martyrdom placed him in a state of liminality.

The body as text

The knowledge that the body has of the world is transmitted through culturally shaped experiences. Each time, each society has its own modes of construction of the body. As an agent of communication the body is the bearer of social, historical, political and religious meanings, it is the pivot of our integration in the world.² To be effective the body has to project itself outside its own frame because corporal behaviour and performances lose their meaning without the presence of an audience. Gestures, expressions of the face and eyes, emotions, the tone of the voice form a constellation of bodily signs that may be defined as *infra-corporal* signs.³ They complement the word and imprint on it an infinity of nuances that interlocutors (the audience) are expected to decipher. Within a culture the actors dispose a certain common corporal register. This symbolic network translates the specificity of their relation with the world. Mary Douglas has shown in *Purity and Danger* that there are symbolic relationships between the human body and the social body and that the control of the body reveals the control of the society.

The *stranger* or foreigner who is ignorant of the totality of these infra-corporal signs and of the subtleties involved in their interaction has another body-language and a different understanding of the signs. Communication may also be disturbed by the *estranged* or *alienated*, by the *unusual*, by the *unconventional*, and by the *mad*, that is by *strangers within*. These are Others who cause disorder and whose behaviour is not reflected in the reassuring mirror of corporal identity of the society in which they live. They are supposed to know the rules of the society, but, knowingly or unknowingly, reject or violate them. Foreigners and strangers within provoke a rupture within the corporal solidarity of the majority, they disarticulate ritual interactions, they are disconcerting and surrounded by chaos or more exactly by a different order.⁴

Much of what characterizes a given culture at a given time is influenced by existing traditions. The assimilation of old traditions with newer ways of life and new concepts is a frequent aspect of periods of transition. This was the case in Late Antiquity with its "Hellenistic levelling", the spread of Christianity,⁵ and later with the supremacy of Arab Islamic culture. With the patina of time, new trends that had been incorporated became customs.⁶ Asceticism was one of the traditions that adapted to changes of time, culture and religious belief.⁷ Assimilation, syncretism, acculturation and integration imply continuity and change, hence transformation. I would like to introduce the concept of innovation as a basic requisite to the process of transformation. Innovation should be perceived not as a sudden mutation but, rather, as the result of a society's gradual reinvention of its cultural heritage and re-elaboration of its oral tradition.⁸

Innovators are often foreigners or strangers within. These outsiders may act as mediators or "cultural brokers" between different forms of culture. As intermediaries they form a bridge between different groups and translate cultural idioms from one situation to another.⁹ The personage around whom the present study is constructed, Victor son of Romanos, had all the requirements for being posed as an innovator and as an exemplar.¹⁰ Not only was he a foreigner to Egypt but he also was an outsider to his own society. As a martyr he was a witness, that is someone who is apart, a stranger who is there but not *in*. He was the passer-by, the

onlooker whose testimony could change the course of things. In early Christianity, a martyr was also the champion of a new body of knowledge,¹¹ a charismatic person who, by offering his life for his faith, subdued chaos and introduced a different order.¹² The meaning of martyr combines the idea of self-sacrifice and annihilation of the body for an ideal with the act of witnessing an event. This double value is present also today in the Arabic word *shahid* which means both martyr, that is one who sacrifices himself for a cause, and witness. The act of the martyr made an ideological choice a question of life and death. By placing a belief before physical survival the martyr asserted the preeminence of culture on nature. However, the martyr relied on his body in order to make his choice public and to reach his goal. Far from negating his body, the martyr made it the chart of his belief and placed it in the foreground for everybody to see and to hear about.

In the present paper I consider the bodily practices of martyrs, saints, and ascetics in early Christianity and Coptic hagiographies and martyrologies as belonging to what Connerton (1989: 72f.) defines as “incorporating practices”, that is culturally specific postures and gestures; I consider them also to be part of “inscribing practices” that have been recorded in writing in the various biographies, hagiographies and martyrologies. I propose to view the body of the martyr as a text and the memory of bodily experiences transmitted through texts as pertaining to religious memory. I argue that the practices to which martyrs subordinated their bodies and the experience of martyrdom permitted them to dissociate themselves from their bodies and placed them in a state of liminality.

As mentioned above I restrict my inquiry to the traditions related to the martyrdom of Victor son of Romanos, also known as Victor Stratelates or Victor the General. A detailed analysis of all available documents would greatly exceed the limits of the present article. Therefore, I shall first give a brief account of the traditions concerning this martyr and reflect on the question of their transmission. This will be followed by a synthesis of the different versions of the Passion of Apa Victor son of Romanos. Thereafter I shall examine the way to liminality.

The traditions of Victor son of Romanos

The Passion of Victor son of Romanos pertains to the cycle of Basilides also known as the cycle of Diocletian. This cycle consists of a chain of traditions stretching from the 5th century to the 19th century, and relating the martyrdoms of high officials of the court of Diocletian. These martyrs were Antiochenes of high birth who were related to each other by family ties and who withstood martyrdom and died in Egypt.¹³ As a literary genre the traditions of Apa Victor son of Romanos belong to the so-called epic Passions.¹⁴ Traditions around Apa Victor son of Romanos exist in different languages: Greek (the martyrdom of Victor and Stephanou), Latin (the martyrdom of Victor and Corona), Coptic, Arabic and Gheez.¹⁵ In the present paper I concentrate on the Coptic and Copto-Arabic traditions. Setting the martyrdom of Apa Victor as the prototype will, in my view, facilitate the study of existing analogies and derivatives in different languages and of different periods. Focusing on one cycle will permit me to follow the ways in which the narrative was transformed through time and how religious memory was constructed.

Coptic cycles relating the acts of martyrs were composed from the 9th to the 12th century. This corresponds to the period during which the last Coptic hagiographies were elaborated. At first, the texts were probably produced by the same school in Alexandria and were often attributed to fictitious authors like John Chrysostom and Demetrius of Antioch.¹⁶ From the Greek-speaking environment of Alexandria *ad Aegyptum* the narratives spread to the Egyptian hinterland, and to be more precise to the Thebaïd.¹⁷ They were translated into the Egyptian vernacular, Coptic. Translating involved interpretation and making the narratives accessible to the Egyptian mentality.¹⁸ Coptic hagiographic texts adopted what Baumeister has defined as the “koptischen Konsens”. Accordingly, the main theme of the “enduring life” (unzerstörbaren Lebens) is consistently reiterated. The “koptischer Konsens” incorporated martyrs, even those who like Victor son of Romanos were originally foreigners, into what could be described as the “Egyptian mode”. The characters were Egyptianized and thus rendered familiar and understandable to Egyptians.¹⁹

As most Coptic hagiographies the Coptic tradition concerning Victor son of Romanos is based on a Greek original which was probably composed in Alexandria during the 5th century.²⁰ The Coptic manuscripts relating the acts of *Apa Victor* son of Romanos date from the 10th century. This was a period during which the Coptic language was in regression and was being replaced by Arabic. Christians of Egypt were challenged by the spread of Islam and had, by this time, become the autochthonous ethnic and religious minority of the country. The Coptic hagiographic tradition of *Apa Biktor* (Victor) son of Romanos includes martyrologies, encomia and homelies. Among them we find a panegyric at the British Museum ascribed to Celestinus of Rome, two encomia at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris attributed, one to Theodosius of Jerusalem and the other to John Chrysostom, and a fourth document in the Pierpont Morgan codex accredited to Theopemptus of Antioch. In addition there are fragments in St. Petersburg, Vienna and Turin. A number of these texts have been more or less adequately studied and published.²¹ Apart from the documents where Victor son of Romanos is the central character there are a number of hagiographic texts belonging to the Basilides cycle where he is mentioned as an exemplar, as is the case in the martyrdom of Tecla and Paese.²²

The Copto-Arabic tradition of *Mari Buqtor 'ibn Romanos* (i.e. Saint Victor son of Romanos) is quite rich. It also consists of martyrologies, encomia and homelies translated and adapted from Coptic originals. The texts were produced during the period stretching from the 13th century to the 19th century. However, the manuscripts have never been studied nor edited. Graf²³ tried to classify a number of manuscripts concerning *Mari Buqtor 'ibn Romanos* but his attempt has often led to confusion, as he has mixed our martyr with another saint Victor, namely Victor of Shu. Samir²⁴ has arranged the Arabic texts according to their incipit. In this way he has been able to recognize 5 different versions of the martyrdom and 2 different accounts of miracles for the anniversary of the dedication of Victor son of Romanos' church on the 27th of Hathur. The texts were attributed to renowned authors like Cyriacus of al-Bahnasa, Demetrius patriarch of Antioch, Celestinus of Rome and Tabuntus (Theopemptos) of Antioch. We

also have a biographical record written in the mid-13th century by Mikhail of Atrib and Malij and edited by Basset and Forget.²⁵ The homelies in Arabic recount the building of the churches and the miracles of *Mari Buqtor 'ibn Romanos*. According to the Coptic-Arabic Synaxarium the feast of Victor son of Romanos' death was on the 27th of Baramuda. A list of churches dedicated to *Mari Buqtor* was drawn up by Abu Salih the Armenian.²⁶

Texts talk to texts

The traditions of Victor son of Romanos give evidence of manuscript transmission. Texts recall other previous texts. They were translated from one language to another. They were re-written, re-interpreted and combined with other independent texts so as to form new texts.²⁷ Texts were recycled and adapted to the taste and mentality of the place and time. Taking our case study, we observe for example how the court of Diocletian evolved from being the martial, male dominated body of Coptic (and Greek) traditions²⁸ into becoming the more "oriental" community of the Arabic versions. Here palace strifes are disclosed before us and intrigues of the harem are revealed.²⁹ Whereas in Coptic texts the father of Victor, Romanos, is a general (*stratelates*), in Arabic texts he is the trusted vizier (*wazir*) and confident of Diocletian. Moreover, while Coptic texts do not give the name of Victor's mother, Arabic documents tell us that she was a Christian lady of high birth and that she was called Martha. Victor is often, as in BNP Arabe 131, fol. 49v, hailed as the "son of Martha" (*ya 'ibn Marta*). Other details in the Arabic versions reflect the Egyptian background, as for example, the comparison of Victor's beauty with the roses of the month of Baramuda, the mummification of the martyr's body, the lamentations of Martha and of her female companion, Thephasia (the sister of the martyr Claudius), at the announcement of his death, and Martha's voyage on the Nile in search of Victor's hidden body.³⁰

There is, to use the expression of Edward Saïd (1983: 46), a "genealogy of texts" where each younger text refers to a mythical first text. Whether this first text actually had existed or not is of minor importance for the authors and copyists of the following

generations.³¹ An example of this is given by the encomium of John Chrysostom on Apa Victor son of Romanos³², where the reference to “the Venerable Book” punctuates the flow of the narrative. In turn, copies established their own hierarchy based on age. The older copy being the more authoritative acted as an original.³³ Generations of texts testify not only to their transmission through time but also to intertextuality, that is the interaction between texts and contexts, the interpenetration between the written texts, orality and iconography. ‘Dialogized texts’ go on modifying each other, and in that process meaning is continuously renewed.³⁴ Plagiarism and forgery have different connotations according to place and time. In Coptic and Copto-Arabic hagiographic literature the recognition of an older text as “authentic” depended on the trustworthiness of the milieu that created it. The “original” text was often accredited to a known and often fictitious author who was supposed to have lived in the glorious patristic period of the 4th century.³⁵ The testimony of such authors added to the narrative’s authority and credibility. Thus, the encomia and homilies of Victor son of Romanos were ascribed to different authors such as Theodosius of Jerusalem, Celestinus of Rome, John Chrysostom and Theopemptus of Antioch. There is often mention of a mysterious priest, Demetrius of Antioch.³⁶ Nevertheless, most relayers of hagiographic compositions usually remained anonymous. Sometimes, as for example in BM Or. 7022 at the British Museum and Ms. Copte 129¹⁵ and Ms. Arabe 212 at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the copyist added a colophon at the end of the manuscript.³⁷ Here the copyist stated his name, title(s) and ancestry, and prayed for spiritual reward for the good deed he had achieved by perpetuating the memory of those who had sacrificed themselves for the sake of their religion. This multiple and anonymous authorship was due in part to the political situation of the time. The disputes with Byzantium and the Chalcedonians from the end of the fifth century to the first half of the eighth century were succeeded by the struggle against the Arab-Moslem domination. Religious, social and political motives coalesced. The stories of martyrs were used not only to keep the memory of past events alive but also to help understand the present.³⁸ In the Basilides cycle, to which the passion of Victor son of Romanos

belongs, the wicked emperor Diocletian is originally either an Egyptian goatherd or someone of low birth who has lived in Egypt for a long time. Once he becomes emperor Diocletian turns against his former countrymen and harasses them. But worse than renegating his origins, Diocletian is an apostate who savagely persecutes his former brethren in religion. The martyr, on the other hand, stands unwavering against the enemies of his religion and the suppressive ruling power and its representatives.³⁹

Literate orality

The Coptic and Copto-Arabic traditions of Victor son of Romanos were, like all hagiographic texts, elaborated in the monastic milieu. They were many-layered narratives which were read aloud or retold to a wider mixed congregation on the martyr's day. I consider these documents as commemorative narratives where knowledge was transmitted both in writing and orally. They testify to the way religious and social memory has been constructed. They served not only to preserve events for posterity but also to express religious, political and social ideas, public and individual ethics.⁴⁰ Some hagiographical texts, like the ones belonging to the traditions of Victor son of Romanos, were literary fabrications cast in an established form. They functioned to transmit ideas and actions to different categories of believers, whether they were monks or laymen, men or women, young or old, rich or poor, literate, illiterate or semi-literate, polyglot or just knew one language, city dwellers or countryside people. The fields of reference used in the texts had to encompass a wide spectrum of associations to reach the different levels of understanding in a mixed congregation. The formulation of such texts was both written and individual on the one hand, and oral and collective on the other hand. The oral quality of the texts is shown by their preference for additive forms rather than subordinative clauses, their reliance on formulaic utterances, mnemonics, loci classici, redundancy and their use of agonistic, emphatic tones. Events are grouped around people rather than people around events. The narrative evolves in a somewhat timeless fashion. The story is interspersed with elements of fiction and embedded in the

marvellous, which transform the *dramatis personae* into legendary mythical characters. Orality and literacy were not mutually exclusive. Both illiterate, semi-literate and literate people were capable of appreciating the same text, although not in the same way. Retelling or reading the acts of martyrs in front of an audience involved an element of recollection. The stories were embedded in treatise rhetoric of a past that was represented ideologically and perpetuated by tradition. The narratives invoked and recreated a specific past, and by constructing that past, they produced myths. They told of the beginnings of a new religious and social order. This ideal past was projected back to the Era of Martyrs under Diocletian, that is before Chalcedon (451 C.E.), and before the Islamic hegemony.⁴¹

The birth of a divine child

Coptic sources inform us that in the third year of his reign, Diocletian established the cult of 70 deities (35 male and 35 female).⁴² He forced his subjects to sacrifice to his gods. Those who refused, as many Christians did, were to be tortured and even condemned to death if they remained adamant. So that despite his reforms, the name of Diocletian was to remain forever tied to one of the last great persecutions of Christians which took place in 303-312 C.E. Coptic and Arabic texts mention that Diocletian was originally a Christian but that he reneged his faith. The reasons given for his apostasy are varied, but the result was that he became determined to rid the empire of all Christians. As a consequence Diocletian was to be remembered as the persecutor par excellence. The Coptic calendar also known as the Era of Martyrs reckons its years from August 29th, 284 C.E. which was the year of Diocletian's accession to the throne.⁴³

The only information we have of Victor son of Romanos' childhood is given by Arabic manuscripts as BNP Arabe 212, BNP Arabe 4782 and BNP Arabe 4793, and the Ethiopic manuscript Ms. Oriental 729 in the British Museum. According to these sources Victor's mother, Martha, who was a devout Christian had lived with her husband Romanos⁴⁴ for thirty years and had borne him no son.⁴⁵ One day, after Martha had finished her prayers, the

statue of the Virgin Mary nodded to her signifying that her supplications had been heard. In due time, Martha gave birth to a son in the town of Antioch. She sent a messenger to announce the news to her husband who was fighting the enemy on the eastern frontiers of the empire together with Diocletian. In our story, as in most examples of virgin birth, the “real” father of a child of divine essence, here a future martyr and saint, is immaterial. This father is of the eternal essence that has no perishable form, and the agent of conception is perceived as the embodiment of a higher cosmic energy. The mother on the other hand is the *prima materia*. She represents the substance, the womb without which the divine spirit or Verb cannot become flesh.⁴⁶ Elements like pain, afterbirth and blood are non-existent during birth, and the child’s safety is often threatened by evil powers. Moreover, the earthly parents of the divine child belong to the privileged class of society.⁴⁷

The son of Martha was called Victor, and as a further sign of the baby’s sanctity God let down a gold cloth to wrap the infant in it. Victor was baptized by the archbishop Theodore, the emperor and the empress attended the ceremony of baptism which was sumptuous. However, the ceremony and the feast following it must have been full of commotion. The texts say that unable to contain her jealousy, the empress tried to kill Victor, but the baby was saved by the Virgin Mary, and that, pushed by his wife, Diocletian tried to steal the golden veil in which the baby was wrapped. However, an angel snatched it away and flew up into the air with it.⁴⁸ The documents also inform us that Victor was betrothed to the daughter of his father’s colleague, Basileides at the age of ten.⁴⁹ We are also told that Victor was sent to school where he was introduced to all the books of the prophets, and that the angel of God preserved Victor from every sin.⁵⁰

The ascetic path

Coptic and Copto-Arabic documents relate that Victor was a very handsome youth. He had an athletic body and his long hair fell freely upon his shoulders. He was a devout Christian. He was charitable, took no interest in appearances and associated only with his inferiors whom he always helped, especially if they were Chris-

tians. He lived in his own apartments in his parents' house. He led a secluded life avoiding the company of his parents, their friends and of other youths. He prayed day and night (1065 prayers during the daytime and 730 prayers each night). He ate once a week, fasting from "one Sabbath to the next Sabbath". He neither ate meat nor fish and never drank wine or any alcoholic or fermented beverage. He actually lived upon a diet of bread and salt and drank only water. He was chaste, used no vulgar language and never swore. He slept on the hard ground and never took a bath. We are also told that Christ appeared to him a number of times during this period and encouraged him to persevere in the ascetical way.⁵¹

Ascetics imposed upon themselves techniques of the body commonly known as practices of self-mortification or self-denial. Among these practices we find chastity, the avoidance of washing and sleeplessness. Chastity entailed the purity of words, thoughts and deeds. It was not only attached to the idea that sex defiled, but also to the conviction that it was possible to transmute and channel reproductive powers into spiritual energy.⁵² Chastity was also tied to the ostentatious deprecation of the body and disregard for its needs and appearance. Fine clothes, perfumes, jewellery and other types of ornamentation were condemned. Washing and care of the body were said to make it "soft" and consequently were to be avoided. However, bodies of martyrs, saints and holy persons were known to perfume the air. They were naturally clean as a reflection of the purity of their souls'.⁵³ Deprivation of sleep was the mark of the spiritual athlete. The goal of wakefulness and all-night vigils was to transcend the normal bodily processes and to achieve heightened consciousness; it helped the ascetic in his vision quest and permitted him to "see" the divinity.

Other recurring features of religious ascetism were fasting and the observance of a special diet. I would like to reflect at greater length on fasting and diet because food is a symbolic vehicle for establishing group identity and because food customs mirror the ordered patterning of a society.⁵⁴ Foodways bind individuals together, serve as a medium of inter-group communication, define the limits of the group's outreach and identity, distinguish in-group from out-group, celebrate cultural cohesion, and provide a context for performance of group rituals.⁵⁵

Fasting or *inedia*, that is the complete or partial abstinence from nourishment, has been connected with rituals of purification, atonement and death, but also with prophecy and revelation.⁵⁶ Diet as a form of control exercised over the body with the aim of establishing a discipline was a basic component of both traditional regimen in medical practice and of ascetic regulation in religion.⁵⁷ The diet of monks, hermits and of ascetics in general consisted mainly of bread, salt, which was supposed to keep illness away, and water.⁵⁸ Sometimes we find vegetables, fruits and oil. The only drink was water. We notice a general avoidance of meat, as it was supposed to make the body heavy, and to give impure thoughts. Meat represented vital energy and prosperity, it was also related to the flesh, hence to sexuality, and to the dead, thus to killing.⁵⁹ Ascetic discipline and diet might have actually helped the future martyr in changing his metabolism so that he could sustain pain under torture.⁶⁰ He could train his body to rely on alternative sources of glucose for the brain and to reduce his need for water.⁶¹ However, we should not strip the stories of saints and martyrs of the marvellous. Saints, martyrs and other holy people were extraordinary individuals and as such were posed as exemplars.⁶² Without insertions of wonders, the narratives would have lost both their popularity and meaning.⁶³

The warrior of God

At the time when Diocletian decreed the worship of his idols Victor was in his twentieth year, that is he was nineteen.⁶⁴ All sources agree on the fact that Victor was of high birth and that his father, who was very close to Diocletian, occupied an important post in the army. Here I would like to draw attention to what could seem an inconsistency in the story. Although Victor is always depicted as someone uninterested in military expeditions and in sports, the texts imply that he actually had a high rank in the army.⁶⁵ In all the stories of his miracles, and whenever Victor son of Romanos appears in dreams, he is fully dressed in his general's uniform.⁶⁶ The same is true in the iconographic representations of this martyr as shown in the monastery of Bawit,⁶⁷ and in the monastery of Saint Anthony.⁶⁸ Victor son of Romanos has a round childish face, he is

shown in the attire of a military byzantine horseman, a spear in his hand and the crown of martyrs on his head; he is riding either a white or a brown horse.⁶⁹ Hagiographies and martyrologies are full of military saints and martyrs who have fought for their faith.⁷⁰ The seeming contradiction between the life of a soldier and that of the peaceable ascetic youth retired from the limelights of society appears to have bothered neither the authors of the texts, nor the storytellers, nor their audiences. From a historical point of view it has to be remembered that Christianity had spread in the ranks of the army already during the first centuries, and that the loyalty of Christian soldiers towards the emperor was often tested. Further, both the soldier and the ascetic were submitted to harsh discipline, both fought for a king and a cause, and both underwent a series of ordeals before reaching their final goal. Constant interaction between the written text(s), the oral performance(s) and iconography united the ascetic to the warrior, and in this process created a heroic religious figure whose struggle against injustice and Evil evoked that of other heroes of the common lore.

The pursuit of martyrdom

According to our sources, it was Victor's father, Romanos, who was in charge of executing the imperial edict. When the turn of his son comes he orders him to sacrifice to the gods. Victor refuses. A long argument between father and son follows. Each of them scorns the other; the heat of the discussion rises dramatically until they both disown each other. Finally, Romanos condemns his son to death and hands him over to Diocletian. The emperor tries to coax Victor. He reminds him of his (Victor's) position in society and that the duty of a son is to obey his father. But this is to no avail; Victor remains inflexible. Changing tone, Diocletian threatens the young man by mentioning the tortures that he, the emperor, has to power to inflict upon his subjects, even those of high birth. Victor answers with insolence. He tears off the gold chain and the insignia of his rank which he is wearing and throws them in Diocletian's face. Diocletian loses his temper and condemns Victor to death. However, the execution is not to take place in Antioch but in Egypt. As a mark of degradation, Victor has the crown of his

head shaved,⁷¹ a bell is attached round his neck, he is tied behind a horse and is dragged around Antioch while four soldiers beat him with branches of a palm tree. This is Victor's first martyrdom.⁷²

Although of noble standing and perhaps occupying a high position in the army, Victor is condemned to torture. We know that in classical Greece and during the Roman Republic, citizens of higher social classes were not tortured. However, with the establishment of the Roman empire, the emperor not only made laws, but also exceptions to laws. He could do away with some of the privileges of the nobility, especially when it was felt that the imperial safety was in danger. Torture or *tormentum* originally referred to a form of punishment, including the aggravated death penalty, to which in classical Greece and under the Republic only slaves were subjected. Later, freemen of the lower social strata and also members of the nobility were liable to torture for certain crimes, in particular for the crime of *lesae majestatis*.⁷³ By rebelling against the divine kingship personified by the emperor Victor became a *perduellio*, in the sense of "public enemy" and more, a "deserter". Having lost his standing Victor son of Romanos could be humiliated and tortured. Torture had a public character; it entailed public dishonour, loss of dignity, status and respect. By submitting himself to torture and having his body broken, the martyr marginalized himself and cut his links with society.⁷⁴ He became a "threshold" person and entered the state of liminality.

Let us come back to our story. Diocletian writes to Armenius, the administrative governor (*Komes*) of Alexandria (*Rakote*) directing him to torture Victor three times.⁷⁵ Before leaving for Egypt, Victor is stripped of his clothes. His neck, hands and feet are loaded with iron fetters. He is allowed to see his mother a last time. At the end of his long and moving meeting with Martha, Victor asks her not to let his dead body remain in a foreign country. She is to bring it back to Antioch and give it an honourable burial.⁷⁶ After the farewell scene with his mother, Victor is then taken on board of the ship sailing for Alexandria. Once there, he is immediately led to the governor of the town, Armenius. During the entire meeting Victor is even more insolent and provocative than during his discussions with his father and Diocletian. He reminds Armenius that he owes his appointment as governor of Alexandria to his father Romanos

and to himself, Victor.⁷⁷ Irritated at being publicly reminded of his debt towards the prisoner, Armenius submits Victor to torture (hot irons, cutting the face, iron fetters, raking, burning with lamps and being thrown into the furnace). The texts tell us that during torture the heart (a metaphor for the soul) of Victor was carried up to heaven. There the assembled saints with the archangel Michael at their head welcomed him and encouraged him to endure the suffering he was being exposed to. Pain itself is never mentioned in the texts, but implied when we are told that whenever the situation became unbearable the archangel Michael came to Victor's rescue. Finally, Armenius decides to get rid of Victor and to put him to death. But the people of Alexandria, fearing that Romanos might one day regret his decision to sacrifice his only child and then take his revenge upon the city, convince Armenius to send Victor away. Armenius agrees and orders Victor to be taken southwards and delivered to Eutychianus, *dux* or military chief of the Thebaid.⁷⁸

Victor reaches Antinoopolis, but the *dux* awaits him still further upstream. The small party, consisting of Victor and his gaolers, sails further south until it joins the party of Eutychianus. The latter improvises a tribunal and submits Victor to torture consisting of cutting off his tongue and ears, putting needles through his skin, making him wear a redhot iron helmet on his head and pouring boiling bitumen down his throat. Victor remains unwavering. In spite of having his tongue severed, he is still able to hold long speeches full of theological insights and discuss intricate religious matters with his torturer. Exasperated, Eutychianus sends Victor further south and exiles him to Hierakon, a military camp situated in the eastern desert.⁷⁹ According to Abu Salih the Armenian and other Arab chroniclers from the Middle-Ages, Hierakon was situated in the vicinity of al-Khusus, south-east of Asyut, and Victor lived there in a dark cell in an abandoned fortress.⁸⁰ Recent investigations, however, point instead to Deir el Gabrawi as being the death place of our martyr.⁸¹ Victor remained in the desert camp for some time. He enjoyed relative freedom, making chairs and lamps which he sold in order to support himself. He led an ascetic life, fasting for long periods of time⁸² and praying day and night.

One day Christ, in the shape of an old man, visits him.⁸³ Much of the dialogue between Victor and Jesus turns around the theme

of foreignness, not only the foreigner who lives in another environment than his original one but also the stranger within. This is the one who has become estranged from his own people, the one who as a consequence of alienation loses all the prerogatives of high birth and social ranking. Jesus soothes Victor's feelings of loss and reminds him that the reward awaiting him is greater than any transient earthly privileges. As most martyrs and saints Victor does not seek approval, affirmation or attention from anybody but God and Christ. He weeps and recalls his past kinship ties and social standing but does not regret them.⁸⁴ Foreignness and the change of environment are for him part of his ascetic training, the way to reach the realm of Christ.⁸⁵ Before leaving, Jesus tells Victor that he will be beheaded the following year. Victor prepares himself for death. With the money he saves from the sale of the objects he makes, Victor buys himself a coffin and provides for his own burial.⁸⁶

Finally, Sebastianus, along with the praetor Asterius and the *dux* Soterichos, submits Victor to a last trial. Victor remains unshakeable while he is eviscerated, treated with boiling oil, has ashes and vinegar poured in his mouth, has red-hot knives driven in his skin, and while his eyes and tongue⁸⁷ are being pulled out. His faith is reinforced during his trial; his body is flooded with grace.⁸⁸ At this moment a young girl named Stephanou (in the Latin sources she is Corona, the wife of a Roman soldier), proclaims her faith and declares that she sees the crown of martyrs over the head of Victor. In my view, the young woman whose name means "crown" both in Greek and in Latin, personifies the martyr's crown. Thus the crown, that is the reward awaiting the martyr, is represented by a feminine figure. However, the narrative does not seem to be affected by the introduction of a gendered symbol. In Copto-Arabic sources Stephanou is fifteen when inspired by the example of Victor son of Romanos converts to Christianity.⁸⁹

Stephanou is submitted to torture and killed,⁹⁰ and Victor is finally decapitated. As in most hagiographies and martyrologies, the story ends abruptly. The actual death appears singularly anticlimactic, especially when put in relation to the lengthy, grim descriptions of torture and mutilations.⁹¹ The death of the martyr was perceived positively in terms of release and imminent resurrection rather than defeat.⁹² In the Ethiopic and Arabic versions of

Victor's last martyrdom we are told that Horion, the soldier who finishes the work as Victor's executioner, takes Victor's body and embalms it.⁹³ He then lays it in a coffin and hides it in a remote chamber of the fortress. Horion leaves afterwards for Antioch. There he hands over to Martha, Victor's mother, the sword which had been used for beheading her son.⁹⁴ Three years later, Martha, guided by the same Horion comes to Egypt. She is taken to the place where the mummy of Victor is kept. In all secrecy, she takes the body back to Antioch.

Abu Salih tells us that when they learned of the disappearance of the martyr's body the natives of the town of al-Khusus rebelled, for by then Apa Victor son of Romanos had become the saint protector of their city.⁹⁵ Here we are confronted with the question of the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body, bodily continuity and of how identity survives dismemberment and reassemblage. This was a central theme in the cult of saints and relics and in the different stories of miracles that were so popular with preachers and audiences. Bodies of martyrs and saints and parts of holy bodies remained incorrupt after death and burial; they never decayed.⁹⁶ This emphasis on the body parts as whole, on mutilated flesh as "intact", "unhurt" is a common feature of hagiographies and martyrologies. Martyrs and saints live on in their severed organs.⁹⁷ Martyrdom anticipated resurrection when the fragmented corpse would be refashioned by God and be granted eternal life and incorruptibility.⁹⁸ What is emphasized repeatedly is the reassembling of the fragmented body for burial and the victory of intactness over division. Bodies of individuals endowed with divine essence remain "unscathed", "unharméd". As mentioned earlier holy bodies perfume the air even if unwashed, while bodies of torturers are said to smell foul, to putrify and to wither away.

The body as battleground

The idea of a composite self that was prevalent in pharaonic Egypt⁹⁹ had developed into a separation between the self, representing the mind, and the body or matter. Matter was related to evil according to the Platonists and the Pythagoreans. Hence, it was deeply repulsive. Nevertheless, the material body was integral to

the notion of person and the needs of the body had to be reckoned with, it was also subjected to a strict discipline that restrained its impulses. In the time of our narrative (3rd century C.E.) pagans and Christians lived in the same mental world. Disdain for the body was in fashion among both of these groups, and both were familiar with techniques of subordinating the body to a strict discipline and to ascetism in general.¹⁰⁰ In *Body and Society*, Peter Brown argues that the drastic changes that occurred in the society of Late Antiquity were carried through by a minority of intensely religious young Christians, men and women, who had decided to own their own selves and become masters of their own bodies. They refused to comply with the rules of society. They inscribed a particular corporal identity on the body to mark it as cultural and to give it symbolic meaning, that is to differentiate it. Their bodies became the instruments of their rebellion against the “establishment”, a way of declaring that they had new allegiances to an ideal order or society that was radically different from the old one. As so well expressed by Tertullian: “*Caro salutis cardo*”;¹⁰¹ the flesh of these young integrist, that is their bodies, became the axis of their salvation.

Foucault, who stands as the modern theorist of the disciplined body, investigated the interface between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self.¹⁰² He maintained that the disciplined body becomes a repressive weapon and consequently gains power over the others. The disciplined body is predictable, it is dissociated from the self, thus it becomes instrumental. Ascetism was tied to self-discipline and self-denial as well as it conveyed the idea of detachment from or renunciation of the world *per se*; “being in the world, but not of it”.¹⁰³ Ascetism was regarded as an effort to strengthen and not weaken the body;¹⁰⁴ it permitted the individual to enter what Keyes^{104b} describes as “an altered state of consciousness”. In fact, pagan philosophical and ascetic traditions valued many of the qualities for which Christian martyrs and saints became renowned.¹⁰⁵ The kind of body an ascetic strove to acquire and to cultivate was the disciplined body. The body became the Other. It was crucial to dominate it, or at least to neutralize it so that it would not stand in the mind’s way.¹⁰⁶ By sub-

mitting the body to a strict rule, the ascetics, hence martyrs and saints, gained power over their environment, and their bodies became their strongest weapon.

The documents relating the story of Apa Victor son of Romanos indicate that by living as an ascetic the young man not only set himself apart from his peers and the rest of his family, but that he actually gained power over them.¹⁰⁷ The family had to comply with his ways as is implied by a passage of the farewell scene when Victor's mother mentions the special clothes she had made for him to wear during prayers and fasting.¹⁰⁸ The father of Victor, Romanos, does not seem to have shown much interest in the habits and beliefs of his son before the sacrifice test.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps he shrugged them off as a youth crisis which would pass away with time, marriage, position and responsibilities. By refusing to sacrifice to Diocletian's gods, Victor endangered not only his own situation but also the position and credibility of his father, hence the security of the whole family.¹¹⁰ An Arabic manuscript from the 19th century¹¹¹ suggests that Romanos played a role in the exile of his son to Alexandria. Here, under the jurisdiction of Armenius, Victor was secure since Armenius, as mentioned, owed his appointment to the assistance of Victor.

Ascetism allowed the martyrs to reconfigure their bodies as battlegrounds. It had trained the future martyr and made martyrdom possible. Ascetism permitted him to distance himself from his body and to abstract himself from earthly ties. Suffering did not deconstruct his world but in fact reinforced it. By marginalizing his body the martyr thwarted the establishment. The more his body was submitted to self-disciplinary techniques and pain, the stronger, the more distant and the more foreign, the more *terra incognita* it became for the Others, among whom were the torturers. At the same time, the disciplined body became the instrument of the martyr's victory.¹¹² The narrative intimates that the ability of the martyr to withstand pain was due to an assimilation of his own body into the glorified body of Christ. Recent psychiatric studies suggest that martyrs could escape pain through the practice of hysterical fugue, that is an altered state of consciousness in which language about realities and the realities represented are decoupled. Fugue can entail changes in self-identity focusing on the

body, such as disowning pain.¹¹³ Neurologists and neurosurgeons are of the opinion that martyrs may have had recourse to the technique of hyper-ventilation.¹¹⁴ The texts relating the martyrdoms of Apa Victor do remind us that, whenever during torture the suffering became unbearable, the heart of the martyr rose to heaven and that the archangel Michael never left his side. This might imply that Victor fainted every time pain exceeded his limit of endurance. However, as mentioned earlier, we should not strip the narratives of their coating of fantastic. The point with tales of martyrdoms is not to stress suffering but, rather, the lack of pain.¹¹⁵ Martyrdom represented initiation, a transitional state and the way to holiness. The more intense the initiation process, the greater the reward at the end of the road.

The way to liminality

In his pioneering work *Rites de Passage*, Arnold van Gennep concentrated mostly on the “spatial movement” of initiation. He stressed the way in which actors pass from a stage where they are separated from society to a liminal state, an interstructural situation of being in a state of transition, to a third stage where the initiate is reintegrated into society. The first phase of rites de passage, separation, comprises symbolic behaviour signifying detachment of the individual or group, either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or a set of cultural conditions (a “state”). The first martyrdom of Victor son of Romanos in Antioch and the departure scene with his mother exemplify well this first part. During the intervening liminal period, the state of the initiate is ambiguous; he is “betwixt and between”.¹¹⁶ During the marginal period sex distinctions are blurred, the “passenger” is sexless or androgynous.¹¹⁷ A further characteristic of transitional beings or “threshold people” is that they, like Victor son of Romanos and the martyr in general, own nothing. They have no status, no rights, no property, no insignia, no rank, no kinship, and they are often secluded from structured society.¹¹⁸ The martyr is placed in a world of violence where he is reduced to the state of shapeless, unnamable thing. However, this state of marginality and the violence to which the martyr’s body has been submitted to

renders him sacred.¹¹⁹ Maurice Bloch¹²⁰ sees liminality as the moment when the initiate is given the transcendental part of his identity. Liminality has a transformative function which makes the transition from one state to the other possible.¹²¹

In our case, Victor is taken away from his environment and is sent to Egypt where he goes through three martyrdoms. Egypt, in particular the south of Egypt and the desert, represents chaos to the civilized urban world of Antioch. In the tale of Victor son of Romanos the transition from order to chaos and finally to a new order is made gradually. At first Victor is submitted to a mild “civilized” trial and martyrdom in his home town Antioch. Being the seat of the emperor, Antioch represented the center of the ordered world. Victor is then sent to Alexandria, which although situated on the periphery, was still part of the structured hellenistic world. Nevertheless, Alexandria was “abroad” and represented uprooting for Victor. In Alexandria he endures severe questioning, but he is not put to death. Instead, Victor is sent further south, to the Thebaid which is still the cultivated countryside. The journey on the Nile is a recurrent feature of Coptic martyrologies. We always read about a martyr sailing up or down the river, or about some Roman governors travelling by boat.¹²² The trial of Victor is improvised without any decorum to support it. Finally, Victor is exiled to the unstructured world of the desert, an empty, untamed landscape on the outskirts of civilization. Liminality in the case of the martyr is, in my opinion, tied firstly to experience (martyrdom) and then to space (the journey from Antioch to Egypt, sailing along the Nile, and finally the desert or the empty space). The flow of time is slow and seems of lesser importance.

The martyr is the traveller and, unlike the passenger of Turner who is passive and similar to the victim taken to sacrifice, he has the choice of deciding whether to continue his journey or not. In fact he is the one in control. Liminality is also tied to the idea of self-sacrifice in the etymological sense of the word, that is of “making (somebody or something, here, oneself) sacred” (from: *sacer*: holy, sacred, *facere*: to make). By offering himself to God, and submitting his body to a strict discipline so as to dissociate himself from it, the martyr sets himself apart. Martyrdom provides him with the means to transcend all limits and to attain gnosis, that is

a knowledge that surpasses all understanding and leads him to merge with Christ. Borderlines become blurred during the transitional state of martyrdom and the martyr is able to travel beyond all boundaries and to experience a mystical union with the divine. He then sees the end of the road.¹²³

The last phase in rites de passage is aggregation. Van Gennep describes this third stage as a reintegration into society, while Turner considers it as a reintegration into the mundane world. Personally, I agree with Bloch¹²⁴, and do not see the last part of rites de passage as a complete reintegration. In part it is true because the initiate may physically come back to his original society, but he is not the same. In this last phase, the sacred has become inherent to his person. Martyrs like Victor son of Romanos never reintegrate into their original society. They never return to their point of departure, but move on to join another society. They reach another world of a very special kind: the realm of the elected few.

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- ² Le Breton, 1982: 223f.
- ³ Le Breton, 1982: 224.
- ⁴ Le Breton, 1982: 228.
- ⁵ Musurillo, 1956: 4.
- ⁶ Halbwachs, 1976: 178f., Naguib, 1993a: 6f.
- ⁷ Chadwick, 1985; Keyes, 1982: 4f.
- ⁸ Graves, 1991: 309; Shennan, 1989: 332f.; Torrence & van der Leeuw, 1989.
- ⁹ Bargatzky, 1989, Firth, 1965; Menzel, 1960; Press, 1969.
- ¹⁰ Brown, 1971, 1987.
- ¹¹ Brock, 1973; Brown, 1982: 153f.
- ¹² Keyes, 1982: 2f.
- ¹³ Amélineau, 1890: 165; Baumeister, 1972: 93f., 131f.; Delehay, 1922: 137; van Esbroeck, 1991; Galtier, 1905; Horn, 1988: LXIIIIf.; O'Leary, 1974: 101f., 278f.; Orlandi, 1991a: 1195; Samir, 1991, 1992: 93f.
- ¹⁴ Delehay, 1921: 236f., 1922: 149f.; Orlandi, 1991a: 1193.
- ¹⁵ Delehay, 1922: 117f.; Galtier, 1905; Horn, 1988: LIIf., LXVIIIIf.; O'Leary, 1974: 278f.
- ¹⁶ Delehay, 1921: 236f.; Orlandi, 1991a: 1197, 1992: 79f.
- ¹⁷ Naguib, 1993c.
- ¹⁸ Naguib, 1992b: 438f., 1994: 100f.
- ¹⁹ Baumeister, 1972: 31, 96f., 131f.; Horn, 1988: LXVI; Orlandi, 1991a: 1193f.
- ²⁰ Delehay, 1921: 236f.; Horn, 1988: LXIf.; Orlandi, 1991a: 1193.
- ²¹ Bouriant, 1893; Budge, 1914; Elanskaja, 1969: 20f.; van Esbroeck, 1991; Galtier, 1905; Horn, 1988; von Lemm, 1911; Rossi, 1893; Till, 1935.
- ²² Reymond & Barns, 1973.
- ²³ Graf, 1944.
- ²⁴ Samir, 1991, 1992: 93.
- ²⁵ Basset, 1905-1928, vol. IV: 338f.; Forget, 1912: 92f.
- ²⁶ Evetts, 1895: 131f., 173f., 210, 214, 249, 251, 280, 282.
- ²⁷ Heijer, 1989: 2f., 190f.; McCoull, 1984.
- ²⁸ BM Ms. 7022, fol. 1b-2a, Budge, 1914: 254f.
- ²⁹ BNP Arabe 212, fol. 151v-154r, BNP Arabe 4793, fol. 159r-162v; Naguib, 1993b: 103f.
- ³⁰ Naguib, 1993b: 103f.
- ³¹ Naguib, 1993b: 102f.
- ³² BNP Ms. Copte 129¹⁵.
- ³³ Messick, 1993: 29f.
- ³⁴ Bakhtin, 1981, 1986; Naguib, 1992b: 438f.; 1993b: 109, 1993c.
- ³⁵ Orlandi, 1980: 226f., 1991a: 1197.
- ³⁶ Orlandi, 1980: 226f., 1991a: 1197.
- ³⁷ Lantschoot, 1929: 85f.
- ³⁸ Naguib, 1993c; Orlandi, 1980: 226f., 1991a: 1197.
- ³⁹ BNP Copte 129¹⁵, 59-60, Bouriant, 1893: 178; BNP Arabe 212, fol. 151v, BNP Arabe 4793, fol. 160r; Amélineau, 1890: 163f.; Berg-Onstwedden, 1990; Schwartz. 1958-60, Youssef, 1989.

Apostasy and the treatment of those who renounced Christianity was a constant source of dispute in early Christianity in Egypt. It continued to be a problem under the Arab domination when a great part of the population embraced Islam (Gellens, 1991: 937; Naguib, 1993b: 108; Orlandi, 1980: 232, 1991a: 1195, 1991b: 1457f.).

⁴⁰ Orlandi, 1980: 232, 1991b: 1454f.

⁴¹ Horn, 1988: LVIII^f.; Naguib, 1993b: 109, 1993c; Orlandi, 1991a: 1192^f., 1991b: 1457^f.

⁴² BM Ms. Oriental No. 7022, fol. 1a; Budge, 1914: 1; see also Arabic texts as BNP Arabe 4782, fols. 78v-79v.

⁴³ Berg-Onstwedder, 1990; Naguib, 1993b: 107, 1993c; Schwartz, 1958-60; Youssef, 1986-89.

⁴⁴ In Coptic and Arabic texts the name of Romanos is sometimes spelled Hermanos or Ehremanos as for example in Paese and Tecla, 78 vii 21, and BNP Arabe 212, fol. 162r.

⁴⁵ BM Ms. Oriental 729, fol. 4a, col. 1; BNP Arabe 4782, fols. 67r-68v, BNP Arabe 4793, fols. 159r-162v, 164r-166v.

⁴⁶ Naguib, 1992a: 6.

⁴⁷ Naguib, 1992a: 7.

⁴⁸ BM Ms. Or. 729, fols. 7b-8a, 10a, BNP Arabe 4782 fols. 68v-75r, BNP Arabe 4793.

⁴⁹ BM Ms. Or. 729, fol. 10b; BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 3a; Budge, 1914: 5; BNP Arabe 212, fol. 195v., BNP Arabe 4782, fol. 75r.

⁵⁰ BM Ms. Or. 729, fol. 11a; BNP Arabe 4782, fol. 75v.

⁵¹ BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 2b-3b, Budge, 1914: 4^f.; Len. 5b-6a, Elanskaja, 1969: 29^f.; BNP Arabe 131, fols. 2v, 3r, 5r-7v, BNP Arabe 212, fol. 195v, BNP Arabe 4782, fol. 75r, BNP Arabe 4793, fols. 167r-167v, 168v, BNP Arabe 8789, fol. 89v; Forget, 1912: 92^f.

⁵² Naguib, 1992a: 8; Resch, 1931: 60^f.; Rousselle, 1983: 167^f.

⁵³ Camporesi, 1988; Classen, 1992: 149^f.; Naguib, 1990: 15^f.; Pouchelle, 1976: 298.

⁵⁴ Douglas, 1979: 41^f.

⁵⁵ Douglas, 1971: 61.

⁵⁶ Arbesmann, 1949-51.

⁵⁷ Turner, 1991: 160.

⁵⁸ Dembinska, 1985; Musurillo, 1956: 14, n. 27.

⁵⁹ Fiddes, 1992.

⁶⁰ Tilley, 1991: 471.

⁶¹ Young & Scrinshaw, 1971.

⁶² Brown, 1971, 1987.

⁶³ It would be a mistake to draw parallels between the diet and fasting of ascetics in Antiquity and early Christianity with the recent phenomena of *anorexia nervosa* and *bulimia*. These latter instances of self-starvation, which are to be found mainly among white, privileged adolescents of which a great percentage are females, have not been related to religious *fasting* or *ascetism* by the medical profession (Bynum, 1987: 297^f.; Pouchelle, 1976: 304^f.). Although *anorexia nervosa* and *bulimia* are means of control over the body and over the others their aims are not religious. In the case of martyrs and saints the expression *anorexia religiosa* might be more befitting (Børresen, 1988: 77). Personally, I prefer to keep to the spirit of the tales and retain some sense of fantastic.

⁶⁴ Horn, 1988: 62^f.

⁶⁵ BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 6b, 8b, Budge, 1914: 11, 15; BNP Copte 129¹⁵, 59, 92, Bouriant, 1893: 177, 220; Horn, 1988: xxxviii^f. The Arabic synaxari tell us that Victor son of Romanos held the third highest position in the empire.

⁶⁶ BNP Copte 129¹⁵, 110-111, 120-121, Bouriant, 1893: 244^f., 256^f.

⁶⁷ Chapel XVII, Clédât, 1904-1906, pl. XXXIX, LIII, LIV-LVI.

⁶⁸ Piankoff, 1956, 1958: 161; see also Leroy, 1975: 16^f., 58^f. & pls. 39-48.

⁶⁹ Lewis, 1973; Meinardus, 1972.

⁷⁰ Delehayé, 1909.

⁷¹ Naguib, 1990: 20.

⁷² BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 6b-8b; Bouriant, 1893: 177f.; Horn, 1988: 80f.; BNP Arabe 131, fols. 10r-21r.

⁷³ Naguib, 1993b: 106; Peters, 1986: 28.

⁷⁴ Tilley, 1991: 469.

⁷⁵ For the translation of the title *Komes* as “administrative governor”, see Horn, 1988: xxxviii, 22f., 184f.

At the time of Diocletian, Rakote designated Alexandria and not only a district of the town.

⁷⁶ BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 9a-11a, Budge, 1914: 15f.; BNP Copte 129¹⁵, 60-61, Bouriant, 1893: 179f.; Horn, 1988: 200f.; BNP Arabe 212, fols. 158v-159r. Distrust of foreign countries and the dread of dying abroad are well known themes in ancient Egyptian literature which have been incorporated in Coptic and Copto-Arabic martyrologies (see commentaries in: Horn, 1988: 227f.).

⁷⁷ BNP Arabe 131, fol. 21v, Arabe 4879, fols. 85v-86r.

⁷⁸ Horn, 1988: 185.

⁷⁹ BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 12a-17a, Budge, 1914: 21f.; Bouriant, 1893: 184f.; Horn, 1988: xif.

⁸⁰ BNP Arabe 131, BNP Arabe 212; Evetts, 1895: 251; Galtier, 1905: 128f.; Horn, 1988: xif., Lv & n. 1.

⁸¹ Horn, 1988: xivf.; Meinardus, 1972: 322f., 1989: 28.

⁸² BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 18b, Budge, 1914: 31, mentions 40 days.

⁸³ BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 17a-19b, Budge, 1914: 29f.; BNP Copte 129¹⁵, 82-95, Bouriant, 1893: 206f.; BNP Arabe 131, fol. 51v-59v, BNP 212, fol. 193v-198v.

⁸⁴ Newbold, 1984: 207.

⁸⁵ Guillaumont, 1968-69.

⁸⁶ BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 19b.

⁸⁷ We have here an example of the marvellous in the narrative. The tongue which had been cut off in the previous torture seems to have grown again.

⁸⁸ Tazi 1990: 545.

⁸⁹ BNP Arabe 131, fols. 61v-63r, BNP Arabe 212, fols. 204r-205r.

⁹⁰ BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 24a-25a, Budge, 1914: 41f.; BNP Copte 129¹⁵, 99-102, Bouriant, 1893: 229; BNP Arabe 131, fols. 62r-63r, BNP Arabe 212, fols. 204v-205r.

⁹¹ Bynum, 1990: 82.

⁹² Newbold, 1984: 207.

The victory of the martyr is expressed by the name Victor which may indicate a status rather than a real name (*prænomen*). The name Victor was popular among martyrs in Africa and elsewhere (Baumeister, 1973: 31 & n. 95; Saxer, 1968). It is likely that it was given posthumously as a sort of *cognomen ex voto* which acknowledged the act of the martyr and asserted the new identity of the bearer.

⁹³ BNP Arabe 131, fol. 64v., BNP Arabe 212, fol. 206r.

It is interesting to note that the one who embalms Victor has an Egyptian name. Mummification was an Egyptian practice since it was believed that the preservation of the body was a prerequisite to eternal life (Baumeister, 1972: 58f.; Naguib, 1991: 104f.; Schenkel, 1977: 13).

⁹⁴ BM Ms. Or. 729, fol. 66b, col. 1; BNP Arabe 131, fol. 64v, BNP Arabe 212, fol. 207v, BNP Arabe 4793, fols. 229v-234v.

⁹⁵ Evetts, 1895: 251.

- ⁹⁶ Bynum, 1990: 65f.
⁹⁷ Camporesi, 1988.
⁹⁸ Bynum, 1990: 50f.
⁹⁹ Naguib, 1994: 102f.
¹⁰⁰ Keyes, 1982: 4f.
¹⁰¹ *De resurrectione mortuorum*, 8.2; title of and quoted in Stroumsa's article (Stroumsa, 1990).
¹⁰² Foucault, 1975, 1984.
¹⁰³ Kaelber, 1987; Stricker, 1976, 1980.
¹⁰⁴ The ideal of the ascetic in Egypt was inspired by the Life of St. Anthony as related by Athanasius.
^{104^b} Keyes, 1982: 2f.
¹⁰⁵ Alliez & Feher, 1990: 47; Dodds, 1965; Fox, 1986; Newbold, 1984: 208.
¹⁰⁶ Tazi, 1990: 547.
¹⁰⁷ BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 2a-3b, Budge, 1914: 4f.; Elanskaja, 1969: 29f.; Horn, 1988: 60f.; BNP Arabe 131, fols. 2v-6v, 9v-10v, BNP Arabe 4782, fol. 89v, BNP Arabe 4793, fols. 167r-168v.
¹⁰⁸ BNP Copte 129¹⁵, 65, Bouriant, 1893: 182.
¹⁰⁹ BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 5a-5b, Budge, 1914: 8f.; BNP Copte 129¹⁵, 45, 51, Bouriant, 1893: 157, 166.
¹¹⁰ BM Ms. Or. 7022, fol. 7b; Budge, 1914: 13.
¹¹¹ BNP Arabe 4879, fols. 97r-97v.
¹¹² Tilley, 1991: 467f.
¹¹³ Tilley, 1991: 472f.
¹¹⁴ Personal communication Dr. Mahmoud Naguib.
¹¹⁵ Bynum, 1990: 82.
¹¹⁶ Turner, 1967: 98f.
¹¹⁷ Girard, 1972: 391; Turner, 1967: 98f.
¹¹⁸ Turner, 1967: 98f.; 1970: 94f.
¹¹⁹ Girard, 1972: 390f.
¹²⁰ Bloch, 1992: 6.
¹²¹ Gilhus, 1984: 110.
¹²² Delehayé, 1922: 322.
¹²³ BNP Copte 129¹⁵, 100-101, Bouriant, 1893: 231; BNP Arabe 131, fols. 63v-64r, BNP Arabe 212, fols. 205r-206r.
¹²⁴ Bloch, 1992: 15.

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Abbreviations follow the guidelines in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, vol. 1, Wiesbaden 1975

BM: British Museum

BNP: Bibliothèque Nationale Paris

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THE IDENTITY OF THE DESTROYER IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA*

LYNN THOMAS

Summary

This paper examines the identity of the deity associated with the periodic destruction of the cosmos as found in the numerous *pralaya upamāna* in the *Mahābhārata*. While this deity is usually identified as Śiva in the *Purāṇas* and later texts, the present paper contends that the situation is rather different in the *Mahābhārata*, and probably points to an earlier stage in the myth's development.

In order to establish this, the instances and characteristics of the various identifications given in these similes are considered in some detail. Antaka, Kāla, Kṛtānta, Kālāntaka, Rudra/Śiva and Yama are each examined in separate sections. From this examination, the conclusion is drawn that the deity most readily identified with the role of cosmic destroyer in the *Mahābhārata* is Yama, either by name or, more often, by epithets associated with him. Some possible reasons for this are considered briefly, as well as the implications which this identification could have for our understanding of the myth.

In the *Purāṇas* and later texts of classical Hinduism the deity most readily associated with the periodic destruction of the world is Śiva. This association is too well known to need documenting: he is identified as the destroyer in the *trimūrti* and the role is widely illustrated in his iconography and myths¹. When we turn back to the *Mahābhārata*, however, a slightly different picture emerges, for while Rudra/Śiva certainly is known as the destroyer there, an examination of the body of epic references suggests that this identification is not yet so firmly established as it is to become in later texts.

The *Mahābhārata* makes reference to the destruction of the world (*pralaya*) in a number of ways². It contains several extended descriptions of the *pralaya*³, and also many short references scattered throughout the text. While some of these short references appear in eulogies to the gods or passages on philosophy, the majority of them take the form of similes comparing a warrior, weapon or event with an aspect of the *pralaya* in order to enhance its terrifying nature. These similes are most concentrated in the battle *parvas*, where they

help build up the atmosphere of dangerous conflict⁴. The following are typical examples of their use:

Then, with blazing arrows, I cut in three that (spear) which was approaching, brilliant as the sun at the final hour — *antakālārkaḍḍīptām*. [5.182.6]

The encounter between those armies was wonderful, like that of two oceans when the end of the *yuga* has arrived — *yugānte samanuprāpte dvayoḥ sāgarayor iva*. [6.1.24]

One of the most frequent comparisons used in these *pralaya* similes is with the presiding deity of the destruction, and it is these references which I propose to explore in some detail here, in order to investigate the picture of the destroyer's identity which emerges. The similes identify the destroyer in a number of different ways and I shall begin by examining each of these identifications in turn, listed roughly in order of their frequency of appearance.

Antaka

The majority of references to the destroyer use a word which personifies the role itself: *Antaka*, *Kṛtānta*, *Kālāntaka*, or *Kāla*, time. All of these terms carry a certain ambiguity as to the nature of the destruction which it is important to note. In some references, the context shows the destruction envisaged to be clearly cosmic and referring to the *pralaya*; in others it is clearly individual and refers to the personal death of mortal creatures; and in many it could equally refer to either. *Antaka*, 'the ender', is the word which is used most often, appearing in about half of the similes examined, and the ambiguity between cosmic and individual death becomes very clear here: *Antaka* is both the 'ender' of all beings *simultaneously* in the destruction of the world at the end of the *yuga*, and the 'ender' of all beings *serially* as the harbinger of individual death who takes the life of all mortals at the appointed time.⁵

In the *Mahābhārata* *Antaka* is put in an explicitly cosmic context in a number of similes by the use of words or phrases which clearly refer to the destruction of the world in the *pralaya*:

like *Antaka* with staff in hand when it is the time of the end of the *yuga* — *yugāntakālasamaye daṇḍahastam ivāntakam*. [7.131.30]

or again:

like *Antaka* created by time (destroying) all beings at the end of the *yuga* — *yugānte sarvabhūtānāṃ kālasṛṣṭa ivāntakaḥ*. [7.170.1]⁶

In other passages, while the context is not made explicitly cosmic in this way, the descriptions, although still open to some ambiguity, would, nevertheless, seem to carry stronger connotations of universal destruction than of individual death. Bhīma, for example, is compared to:

Antaka staff in hand at the time of the destruction of creatures — *prajāsamkṣepasamaye daṇḍahastam ivāntakam* [3.153.25]

and Aśvatthāman, massacring the sleeping warriors in the *Sauptika*, to:

Antaka created by time — *kālasṛṣṭa ivāntakaḥ*. [10.8.71]⁷

The majority of references to *Antaka*, however, remain straightforwardly ambiguous. Thus, for example, various warriors are simply likened in appearance to *Antaka*, or said to be a match for *Antaka*, with no distinguishing details being provided to identify either the god of death removing individual warriors, or the universal destroyer threatening the whole battlefield:

Duryodhana standing in his chariot... in battle like *Antaka* himself — *duryodhanāḥ sthitvā rathe... antakapratimaṃ yudhi*. [9.5.7]

Nevertheless, despite the intrinsic ambiguity of the phrase, in many instances the case for continuing to understand these references in a cosmic context is strengthened by a number of factors. In many passages, for example, *Antaka* is qualified by adjectives more suggestive of the universal destroyer: *kruddha*—enraged; *vyāttānana*, *vyādītāsya*—with gaping mouth;⁸ while in others, the sheer scale and bloodiness of the carnage described evokes the image of universal destruction:

With bloody, fat-smeared limbs, dripping with marrow and fat, Bhīma wandered through the battle like *Antaka*, staff in hand—*medorudhiradigdhaṅgo vasāmajjāsamukṣitaḥ vyacarat samare bhīmo daṇḍapāṇir ivāntakaḥ* [6.58.51]

as does the close proximity of explicit *pralaya* imagery:

Then, like enraged *Antaka*... or irresistible Death, staff in hand impelled by time... or the blazing fire at the end of the *yuga*... —*tato 'ntaka iva kruddhaḥ... daṇḍapāṇir ivāsahyo mr̥tyuḥ kālena coditaḥ... yugāntāgnir ivārciṣmān...* [7.64.14-15]⁹

Moreover there are, conversely, no clear instances of references where *Antaka* as the harbinger of individual death would be the more obvious interpretation, rather than just a possible one. Even where qualified by adjectives which would seem to point to this: *daṇḍahasta/pāṇir*—staff in hand; *pāśahasta*—noose in hand, the context still makes universal destruction the more natural inference in many cases. Thus, taking *pāśahasta* as the adjective most characteristic of the god of death, we still find it employed next to *pralaya* imagery:

Like the blazing fire of time, like *Antaka*, noose in hand...—*taṃ dīptam iva kālāgnīm pāśahastam ivāntakam* [9.11.2]

or in a context of mass destruction:

Plunging into the host of chariots and multitudes of horses, Phalguna wandered among the divisions like *Antaka*, noose in hand—*vigāhan sa rathānikam aśvasaṃghāṃś ca phalgunah vyacarat pṛtanāmadhye pāśahasta ivāntakaḥ*. [8.40.91]¹⁰

Daṇḍahasta/pāṇir occurs in similar cases and also, more tellingly, in one of the explicitly cosmic references cited above:

like *Antaka* with staff in hand when it is the time of the end of the *yuga*—*yugāntakālasamaye daṇḍahastam ivāntakam*. [7.131.30]¹¹

It would appear, then, that although *Antaka* is only used to refer explicitly to the deity of universal destruction in a handful of passages, the case for reading the majority of these references in this light is strong and this, significantly, still applies even when the word is qualified by adjectives more proper to the god of death. I shall return to this point below.

Kāla

Kāla, time, occurs less frequently than *Antaka* in these references but carries more consistently cosmic connections. These are made explicit in a number of instances by the use of *yugānte*, *yugakṣaye*, etc.:

[Bhīma's face is] like that of *Kāla* wishing to consume all creatures at the end of the *yuga*—*yugānte sarvabhūtāni kālasyeva didhakṣataḥ*. [2.39.12]
The Pārthas will today see my prowess... like that of *Kāla* at the end of the *yuga* — *adya me... drakṣyanti vikramaṃ pārthāḥ kālasyeva yugakṣaye*. [7.134.55]¹²

Where the cosmic context is not made explicit in this way, world destruction rather than individual death is still the more obvious interpretation in most cases. Again, this can either be lent by the proximity of *pralaya* imagery:

Irresistable as the staff-wielder, he shall roam like *Kāla*. Lion-necked and noble, he is equal to the *yugānta* fire in anger—*daṇḍapāṇir ivāsahyaḥ kālavat pracariṣyati yugāntāgnisamaḥ krodhe śiṃhagrīvo mahāmatih* [5.164.10-11]

by reference to rage, etc., or mass destruction;¹³ or found in the many compounds which routinely use the word as a qualification of *agni*, *sūrya*, etc. to indicate an eschatological context:

with a radiance like the fire of time—*kālānālasamadyutiḥ* [3.195.21]
risen like the sun of time—*kālasūrya ivoditah*. [5.9.44]¹⁴

Kāla is also qualified by other adjectives used of *Antaka* and, once again, characteristics pertaining more to the god of individual death sometimes appear in a context which is explicitly cosmic:

[Bhīma] displayed his force... like *Kāla* the ender of beings when, grasping his staff and desirous of consuming (creatures), he despatches them at the end of time—*prāduścakre vegam... yathāntakāle kṣapayan didhakṣur bhūtāntakṛtkāla ivāt-tadaṇḍaḥ*. [8.54.7]¹⁵

The identification of *Kāla* as cosmic destroyer is also made in a number of passages outside the battle similes. The best known example is, of course, Kṛṣṇa's revelation to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

I am world-destroying time, full-grown, arisen here to annihilate the worlds—*kālo 'smi lokakṣayakṛt pravṛddho lokān samāhartum iha pravṛtṭaḥ*. [6.33.32]¹⁶

A similar statement occurs in the session with Mārkaṇḍeya, when the Viṣṇu child identifies himself as the supreme deity responsible for the creation and destruction of the world:

And when the end arrives, I become most dreadful time and alone destroy the whole world, together with its moving and standing creatures—*antakāle ca saṃprāpte kālo bhūtātidadaruṇaḥ trailokyam nāśayāmy ekaḥ kṛtsnam sthāvara-jaṅgamam*. [3.187.32]¹⁷

In many other passages in the *Mahābhārata*, the periodic destruction of the world and all the creatures in it is seen as just one aspect of *Kāla*'s wider role. In the epic, as in previous literature, time comes to take on a metaphysical significance beyond the strictly

temporal sphere. The logic of this is as follows: as everything must happen in time, so too, in turn, is time identified with everything that happens, both ontologically and, more typically, as the causal and ordering principle in the world. In this role, time is seen to create everything and ordain its fate and eventual destruction. The *Mahābhārata* reflects on the metaphysical significance of time in many places and the inevitability of events ordained by time is a continual refrain. The following speech by Saṃjaya, attempting to reconcile Dhṛtarāṣṭra to the loss of his sons, is fairly typical of this theme and appears at the beginning of the epic, setting the tone for the narration to follow:

All this has time as its root... time cooks beings, time crushes them. time again allays the time which burns up creatures—*kālamūlam idaṃ sarvaṃ... kālaḥ pacati bhūtāni kālaḥ saṃharati prajāḥ nirdahantaṃ prajāḥ kālaḥ samayate punaḥ*.

Time transforms all modes of existence in the world, both good and evil. Time dashes down all creatures then sends them forth again.

Time wanders among all beings, impartial and unchecked—*kālo vikurute bhāvān sarvāḥ loke śubhāśubhān kālaḥ saṃkṣīpate sarvāḥ prajā visṛjate punaḥ kālaḥ sarveṣu bhuteṣu caraty avidhṛtaḥ samaḥ*.

Past and future states of being and those which come round now—realising these are created by time, you should not lose your understanding—*atītānāgatā bhāvā ye ca vartanta sāmpratam tān kālanirmītān buddhṛtā na saṃjñān hātum arhasi*. [1.1.187-190]

Time's role as destroyer is mentioned in the context of these passages and once again, the ambiguity between individual and cosmic destruction, now seen more properly as a continuum, is displayed. In a longer debate on the nature of time between Bali and Indra at 12.220, the related roles of fate, individual death and cosmic destroyer are interchanged throughout. From Bali's teaching, Indra comes to see that:

No-one at his end escapes the fire which is forever cooking beings—*bhūtāni pacataḥ sadā... kālasya kṣayaṃ prāpto na mucyate* [12.220.94]

and applies this both individually:

‘I saw him just now. How is he dead?’ Such is the lament heard of people seized by time—*idānīm tāvad evāsau mayā drṣṭaḥ kathaṃ mṛtaḥ iti kālena hriyatām pralāpāḥ śrūyate nṛṇām* [12.220.99]

and cosmically:

I, too, know likewise that this world is not eternal. It is thrown into the fire of time which is hidden but terrible, imperishable and ever burning—*aham*

apy evam evainaṃ lokaṃ jānāmy aśāśvatam kālāgnāv āhitam ghore guhye satatage 'kṣare.
[12.220.92]

In this role as fate and harbinger of destruction, the physical aspect of *Kāla* is sometimes described. Earlier in the debate, Bali calls him:

A dark man, standing there, dreadful, having bound me like a brute bound with rope—*ayaṃ sa puruṣaḥ śyāmo... baddhvā tiṣṭhati mām raudraḥ paśuṃ raśanayā yathā* [12.220.82]

and a more detailed description occurs in the *Mausala Parva*, where *Kāla* wanders around the houses of the Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas, foretelling their doom:

A dark reddish-brown person with shaven head, dreadful and monstrous—*karālo vikaṭo muṇḍaḥ puruṣaḥ kṛṣṇapiṅgalaḥ.* [16.3.2]

Kṛtānta etc.

Kṛtānta—the end-maker—and *Kālāntaka*—time the destroyer—are other less frequently used words. *Kṛtānta* occurs in one explicitly cosmic context:

[Bhīma's face] was like that of *Kṛtānta* incarnate when the time for the end of the *yuga* arrives—*yugāntakāle saṃprāpte kṛtāntasyeva rūpiṇaḥ* [2.64.15]

and appears cosmic by close juxtaposition to eschatological imagery in one more.¹⁸ Apart from this, however, the other passages are either ambiguous or would seem to refer more readily to individual death.¹⁹

Kālāntaka occurs occasionally on its own:

Splendid as *Kālāntaka*, [Bhīma] sent the Saindhava's horses and charioteer to Mṛtyu's realm—*saindhavasya tathāśvāṃś ca sarathim ca... prāhiṇon mṛtyulokāya kālāntakasamadyutiḥ* [6.109.13]²⁰

but more frequently in the compound *Kālāntakayama*:

And then, alone and enraged, increasing fear among the enemy [Bhīma] stupefied them, the image of *Kālāntakayama*—*ekaḥ saṃkruddhaḥ śatrūnām bhayavardhanaḥ mohayām āsa ca tadā kālāntakayamopamaḥ.* [6.50.42]

Although an eschatological connection for *Kālāntakayama* is nowhere made explicit in the text by the use of a time referent like *yugakṣaye*, etc., many of the references do clearly lend themselves

more readily to an interpretation of universal destruction. One example would be the following, of the fire in the blade of grass which Aśvatthāman hurls at the Pāṇḍavas:

like *Kālāntakayama*, as if it would burn the three worlds—*pradhakṣyann iva lokāṃs trīn kālāntakayamopamaḥ*. [10.13.20]

Or another:

Sharp-edged and spotless the discus was like *Kālāntakayama*... I angrily hurled it at that [city]. Then the form of Sudarśana flying through the sky was the double of the haloed sun at the end of the *yuga*—*kṣurāntam amalam cakram kālāntakayamopamam*... *tasmai prāhinaṃ ruṣā rūpaṃ sudarśanasyāsīd ākāṣe patatas tadā dvitīyasyeva sūryasya yugānte pariveśinaḥ*. [3.23.30-32]²¹

Rudra/Śiva

Comparison is made with Rudra/Śiva or an epithet of that god in only a few of the similes. Three verses explicitly refer to cosmic destruction and clearly identify Rudra as the deity of this. In one, Garuḍa is said to be:

like mighty Pinākin enraged at the end of the *yuga*—*yugāntakāle saṃkruddhaḥ pinākīva mahābalaḥ*. [1.28.20]

Elsewhere it is Dhṛṣṭadyumna who is compared to the enraged Pinākin at the dissolution of the *yuga*—*yugasamkṣaye* [5.168.5] and in the third the battle ground is said to be:

like the pleasure-grove of Rudra when he slays creatures at the end of time—*ākṛīda iva rudrasya ghnataḥ kālātyaye paśūn*. [7.18.35]²²

In a few other references, although the cosmic connotations are not made explicit in this way, they again present the most likely interpretation. Thus Arjuna will slay enemies in the battle:

like enraged Rudra (slays) creatures—*kruddho rudraḥ paśūn iva* [7.18.3]

a phrase which is repeated in two other references.²³ Bhīma on the battle-ground is compared to Śaṃkara dancing—*nṛṭyantam iva śaṃkaram* [6.58.56], the only reference to use this phrase,²⁴ and his feats in battle are likened to those of Rudra slaying all beings—*nighnataḥ sarvabhūtāni rudrasya* [8.App.I.17.28-9]. Duryodhana also threatens his enemies *prajānām iva saṃkruddham śūlapāṇim*—like the angry Śūlapāṇi (threatens) created beings [9.31.38] and Aśvatthāman, prior to slaughtering the sleeping warriors says:

I shall roam among the Pāncālas, crushing them today in combat, like enraged Rudra himself among the beasts, *pināka* in hand—*pāñcāleṣu carisyāmi sūdayann adya saṃyuge pinākapāṇiḥ saṃkruddhaḥ svayaṃ rudraḥ paśuṣu iva*. [10.3.29]²⁵

Elsewhere, however, comparisons with Rudra either remain ambiguous:

[The Pāṇḍavas] will roam at the forefront of their army like Rudra—*etc camūmukhagatāḥ... rudravat pracariṣyanti* [5.166.19]

or else the simile seems to be connected more with feats like the slaying of the demon Andhaka.²⁶

Yama

In the battle similes themselves, Yama's name is usually only found in the compounds *kālāntakayama*, discussed above, *yamakālāntaka* or *yamāntaka*, neither of which occur in contexts which tell us anything about his role.²⁷ More information is given in the *Mahābhārata* as a whole, however, although, as would be expected, he is referred to mainly in his non-cosmic role, as the presiding deity of death and the dead. The majority of references to Yama consist of threats to dispatch people to his realm, and this and similar phrases function as straightforward synonyms for death.²⁸

The most sustained description of Yama in his role as overseer of individual death occurs in the passage where the god appears to Sāvitrī as she sits by her dead husband:

After a moment she saw a person in a yellow robe with a turbanned head, handsome with a splendour like that of the sun. Dark and clear, red-eyed, noose in hand, he was terrifying... *muhūrtād iva cāpaśyat puruṣaṃ pīlavāśasaṃ baddhamauliṃ vaṇuṣmantam ādityasamatejasam śyāmāvadātāṃ raktākṣaṃ pāśahastaṃ bhayāvaham...*

Then Yama forcibly pulled out from the body of Satyawat a thumb-sized person bound with the noose and in his power... (and) having bound him, set out southwards—*tataḥ satyawataḥ kāyāt pāśabaddhaṃ vaśaṃ gatam aṅguṣṭhamātraṃ puruṣaṃ niścakaṛṣa yamo balāt... yamas tu taṃ tathā baddhvā prayāto dakṣiṇāmukhaḥ*. [3.281.8,9,16,18]

Here Yama is depicted with his characteristic noose—*pāśahasta*—but in other references mention is made of his staff—*daṇḍa*, also.²⁹ Related to this role as god of the dead, Yama is also

characterized as the lord of the *pitrs* in a number of references—*yamaḥ pitṛñām īśvaraḥ*³⁰ and the guardian of *dharma* and punisher of evil.³¹ He is also named as one of the four world guardians—*lokapāla*, along with Indra, Agni and Varuṇa.³²

While these more familiar characteristics are found in the bulk of the epic references to Yama, in some his role as god of the dead is put in an explicitly cosmic context. This is made clear in the description given in the *Nalopākhyāna*:

Then (came) in person glorious Yama, the illustrious destroyer of the world... along with the *pitrs*...—*tathā lokāntakṛc chrīmān yamaḥ sāksāt pratāpavān ... sārđham pitṛbhir...*

Staff in hand, of inconceivable soul, the destroyer of all beings: Vaivasvata, the king of *dharma*, illuminating the three worlds with his celestial chariot... like a second sun when the end of the *yuga* arrives—*daṇḍapānir acintyātmā sarvabhūtavināśakṛt vaivasvato dharmarājo vimānenāvibhāsayan trīḥ lokān... dvitīya iva mārtaṇḍo yugānte samupasthite*. [3.42.9-11]

A few other references support this. In one, Śrutakarman is said to rout his enemies like:

Enraged Pretarāj does all creatures at the final hour—*antakāle yathā kruddhaḥ sarvabhūtāni pretarāj* [8.10.16]

and elsewhere, Nārāyaṇa, identifying himself with the *pralaya*, says:

I am the fire of annihilation, I am the Yama of annihilation, I am the sun of annihilation, I am the wind of annihilation—*ahaṁ samvartako jyotir ahaṁ samvartako yamaḥ ahaṁ samvartakaḥ sūryo ahaṁ samvartako 'nilaḥ*. [3.187.17]

One or two other references also lend themselves to a cosmic reading, although this is not made explicit. In one, the terrible appearance of the corpse-strewn battleground is likened to:

The realm of the lord of the *pitrs* at the destruction of creatures—*pitṛpatirāśtram iva prajākṣaye* [8.21.6]

and in another, Yama is mentioned next to *pralaya* imagery, in conjunction with *kālarātri*, the Death Night:

[Yudhiṣṭhira's weapon] was like a great meteor at the end of the *yuga*. And it was like the Death Night, noose in hand, the terrible maid-servant of Yama—*yathā yugānte mahatīm ivolkām tāṁ kālarātrīm iva pāsahastāṁ yamasya dhātrīm iva cograrūpam*. [9.16.41,2]³³

Mixed passages

In a number of passages similes employing different designations are used side by side, showing a simultaneous awareness of the various possibilities and suggesting that they were all part of the narrators' stock in hand.³⁴ In 6.58.51f, for example, Bhīma is *daṇḍapāṇīr ivāntakaḥ* in v.51 and *pinākīva* in v.52. A little further on at v.55 he is *kṛtānta iva* and then in v.56 we find the simile with *nṛtyantam iva śaṃkaram* given above. Similar juxtapositions occur in 6.59.11f where Bhīma is variously compared to *daṇḍapāṇī antaka* [v.11]; *vyādītāsya antaka* [v.20]; *vyāttānana antaka* [v.23]; *kāla* [vs.12,17] and, in the midst of this, his mace is said to be *pinākam iva rudrasya* [v.16]. In other passages the comparisons are put explicitly side by side in a compound or list. Thus, for example, Arjuna is compared to Rudra, Śakra and *Antaka—rudraśakrāntakopamam* [7.123.25] and in another passage he is compared to:

Enraged *Antaka*, Vāsava with his thunderbolt, irresistible Death with staff in hand... imperturbable Śūlapāṇī, Varuṇa with his noose, the blazing fire at the end of the *yuga*—*antaka iva kruddhaḥ savajra iva vāsavaḥ daṇḍapāṇīr ivāśahyo mṛtyuh...* *śūlapāṇīr ivākṣobhyo varuṇaḥ pāśavān iva yugāntāgnīr ivārçiṣmān*. [7.64.14-15]³⁵

Conclusions

We are now in a position to draw some conclusions from this analysis of the battle similes and related references. The first point to note is that although Rudra/Śiva is clearly known as the world destroyer in a few of the references examined, an equal number of explicitly cosmic references give this role to the god more usually associated with individual death, Yama, and these few explicit references are augmented to a significant degree by those which use the compound *kālāntakayama*, with its strongly cosmic connotations. Even at this stage of the investigation, therefore, Yama can be seen to have at least as strong an association with the role of world destroyer in the *Mahābhārata* as Śiva. As we saw, however, references to both of these deities are heavily outnumbered by those which use a name derived from the role itself: *Kṛtānta*, *Kāla* and, particularly, *Antaka*. The use of these names is significant to our enquiry, for although they come to have some association with Śiva

in later literature, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that up to and including the time of the *Mahābhārata* they were far more strongly connected to Yama, and would thus add considerable weight to his identification as destroyer in the epic.

The association of these words with Yama in the earlier texts is too universally agreed upon to need much documentation.³⁶ The earliest evidence of the link comes from the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*, where Yama is mentioned next to *Antaka* and *Mṛtyu*, with the three serving either as synonyms or else having some very close connection.³⁷ The *Atharva Veda* also mentions Yama alongside *Antaka*³⁸ and the connection continues into the *Mahābhārata*, where it is noted by Hopkins, who states that the names Yama, *Antaka* and *Kāla* are almost poetical equivalents.³⁹

The connection of these names with Yama, as synonyms or associates, persists into the *Purāṇas*⁴⁰ but here the situation is complicated, as it is at this stage that they come to have some association with Śiva also. O'Flaherty discusses this phenomenon in relation to *Kālāntaka* in *The Origins of Evil*, where she argues that the name was transferred from Yama to Śiva, reinterpreted to mean 'the ender of *Kāla*' (Time as death), and used to illustrate Śiva's power over death, exercised on behalf of his devotees.⁴¹ *Kāla* also comes to have a strong association with Śiva in the *Purāṇas* in his role as *Mahākāla*, and there is some evidence of this tendency in one or two epic references also.⁴²

Despite this, however, the evidence would seem to point very clearly to these names retaining their connection with Yama in the *Mahābhārata*, as Hopkins argues. *Kālāntaka* is too explicitly joined with Yama in compounds to leave any doubt of this and *Kāla*, also, is linked with Yama in sufficient references to suggest that this is still the predominant association.⁴³ When it comes to *Antaka*, the name used most frequently in the similes, there is little to suggest that the association ever moved away from Yama, even in later literature, where it is *Hara*, or a derivative of the word, that is most commonly used to depict Śiva in his role as world destroyer.⁴⁴ The strength of the connection between these names and Yama can also be seen clearly in the adjectives and descriptions applied to them. Yama is most typically depicted with staff or noose in hand—*daṇḍahasta*, *pāśahasta*, etc., and these phrases are also frequently

applied to *Antaka* and *Kāla*, as we saw. Again, the description of Yama given in his encounter with Sāvitrī: dark, terrifying, binding with his noose, compares quite closely to that which Bali gives of *Kāla*: dark, fierce, binding Bali like an animal, as well as to the one found at the beginning of the *Mausala Parva*. All of this would uphold the suggestion, therefore, that the association of *Antaka* and *Kāla* with Yama is still sufficiently strong in the *Mahābhārata* for the references which use these terms to add their weight to the claim that Yama is more typically the destroyer of the world in these similes than Śiva.

If this is the case then, these references would seem to point quite clearly to the existence of an earlier stage of the myth, where Yama as god of the dead extended his role to encompass the death of the cosmos, a stage which lasted until the task was attached to the emerging deity Śiva who soon overtook him in importance.⁴⁵ That this is an earlier stage is born out not just by Śiva's eclipse of Yama as destroyer in later texts, but also by the fact that the identification occurs more often in these similes, which are formulaic in nature and thus more likely to preserve archaic ideas.⁴⁶ Elsewhere in the epic, by contrast, Śiva is identified as the destroyer rather more consistently.⁴⁷

Important as this may be for our understanding of the myth's development, however, the likelihood that Yama should have held the role of world destroyer prior to Śiva also reinforces something of significance for our understanding of the cosmic cycle as a whole. Throughout the references examined earlier an ambiguity between individual and cosmic destruction was repeatedly noted, and it was suggested that this ambiguity should be more properly identified as a continuum between the individual and cosmic spheres. If Yama more naturally took the role of world destroyer in the earlier stages of the myth it would bear out this suggestion, and show that the death of the cosmos was in some way seen as an extension of the death of individual mortals.

This, in turn, would relate to a broader body of evidence which suggests that the repeated destruction and recreation of the cosmos is, to a large extent, modelled on the human cycle of death and rebirth, both in its conception and in the logic of its operation. This is seen most obviously, for example, in the fact that the cosmic cycle

is presented as part of Brahmā's individual cycle (one revolution of the cycle is equated with a day or life of Brahmā) and is also upheld by Biardeau's convincing demonstration of the connections between the cosmic cycle and the yogic processes of the great god.⁴⁸ Both of these instances, and many others, point to a conception of the cosmos and its workings which is centred on human patterns and concerns and serves primarily as a vehicle for their exploration.

Given this tendency to centre the cosmic in the individual, it is not surprising that Yama should at first have been the more obvious harbinger of the destruction of the cosmos, as he was of death for human individuals. Equally, however, as his importance was increasingly overshadowed by Śiva, and to some extent subsumed by him, it is not surprising that a role of this significance should have been taken over by the greater deity, so fitted for it as he was in the metaphysical complexities of his dangerous and ambivalent nature.

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¹ See for example *Kūrma Purāṇa* 2.44.1ff, which shows Śiva destroying the world with his *tāṇḍava* dance.

² It should be stated at this point that I am concerned here primarily with the epic's explicit presentation of the *pralaya*, in descriptions and imagery, and not with any symbolic or structural resonance that the *pralaya* may have with the epic events. For discussions of this, see M. Biardeau, "Etudes de Mythologie Hindoue: 4", *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, XII (1976), pp. 203ff; J. Scheuer, *Śiva dans le Mahābhārata* (Paris, 1982), pp. 326ff; A. Hildebeitel, *The Ritual of Battle: Krishna in the Mahabharata* (Ithaca, 1976), pp. 299ff; R.C. Katz, *Arjuna in the Mahabharata* (Columbia, S.C., 1989), pp. 76ff; 109ff; 251ff; Idem, "The *Saṁp-tika* Episode in the structure of the *Mahābhārata*", in *Essays on the Mahābhārata*, ed. A. Sharma (Brill, 1991), pp. 130-49 and especially pp. 139ff. As well as looking at its role in the *Mahābhārata*, Biardeau has analysed the wider significance of the *pralaya* in great depth, and this is the subject of *EMH* 4 as a whole.

³ At 3.186.56ff; 12.225.1f; 300.1f; 326.28-30; 335.11-14. These and all references unless otherwise specified are to V.S. Sukthankar, et. al. (eds.), *Mahābhārata: Critical Edition* (Poona, 1933-70).

⁴ Such similes are, of course, not unique to the *Mbh* and are found also in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and elsewhere: see J.L. Brockington, "Figures of Speech in the *Rāmāyaṇa*", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 97, (1977), pp. 441-59. R.K. Sharma discusses the use and occurrence of these similes and other poetic forms in the *Mbh* in some detail in *Elements of Poetry in the Mahābhārata* (Berkeley, 1964). The narrative purpose of *pralaya* imagery in the *Mbh* is a matter of some debate, with some scholars arguing that the frequent occurrence of these similes lends an eschatological significance to the events described, while others see them as merely stock descriptive formulae which add little of importance to our understanding. On this see, Scheuer, *Ibid.*, p. 150 and Katz, *Ibid.*, pp. 78 and 106ff, where she examines the mythic value of the battle imagery in general and discusses the arguments of Biardeau and Hildebeitel on this point.

⁵ I shall return below to the significance and the antecedents of this and other names used.

⁶ For other explicitly cosmic examples see 7.33.4—*yugānte cāntako*; and 2.18.6—*lokasya samudīrṇasya nidhanāyāntako yathā*.

⁷ A phrase used previously of Bhīṣma at 6.104.39. For similar examples see 7.101.44—*ādatta sarvabhūtāni prāpte kāle yathāntakaḥ*; and 8.46.10 *kupilenāntakeneva prajāḥ sarvā*...

⁸ See, for example, 7.100.31—*śataśaś cāparān yodhān... raṇe... kruddho 'ntaka iva prajāḥ*; or 6.58.33—*abhyadhāvad gajāṇīkaṃ vyādītāsya ivaṇtakaḥ*. For other occurrences of these adjectives with *Antaka*, see: *vyādītāsya* 6.59.20; 102.18; 110.38; 112.74; 7.81.10; 85.30; 92.27; 120.42; 137.49; 140.8 *vyāttānana* 3.125.1; 6.55.45; 59.23; 78.23; 103.93; 104.37; 7.9.45,66; 144.9; 158.15; 8.45.7 *kruddha*, etc. 1.185.5; 7.50.80; 63.29; 75.29; 128.25; 8.33.7; 39.35; 46.10; 9.9.24; 13.31; 16.30.

⁹ That the battle should evoke the spectre and images of universal destruction is not, of course, surprising, given the very strong indications in the epic as a whole that the battle is meant to represent an echo, at the very least, of the *pralaya* to come. For arguments on this, see references to Biardeau, etc. given in fn. 2.

¹⁰ *pāśahasta*, etc. is also found with *Antaka* at: 6.105.10; 7.36.31; 8.40.95; 13.14.136.

¹¹ *daṇḍahasta/pāṇir* is also found with *Antaka* at: 2.72.31; 3.153.25; 4.22.19; 5.50.7; 6.50.2; 58.51; 59.11; 7.8.57; 98.35; 103.68; 7.14.5; 8.20.29; 43.70; 9.18.46; 24.28; 25.2; 31.9.

¹² For other references including *yugānte*, *yugakṣaye*, etc. c.f. also, 6.53.2; 59.12.17; 73.37; 98.14; 100.4; 8.55.28.

¹³ See for example: 9.6.29—*vicarisyaty abhīḥ kāle kālāḥ kruddhaḥ prajāṣu iva*; or 8.54.8—*vyāttānanasyāpatato yathaiva kālasya kāle harataḥ prajā vai*. Similar references include 12.48.5, which likens the battlefield to the drinking area of *Kāla*—*āpānabhūmiṃ kālasya*; and 1.219.6, which states that Kṛṣṇa killed the Khāṇḍava forest creatures in their thousands, like time—*kālavat*.

¹⁴ For similar examples see: *kālasūrya*—7.7.29; 15.15; 76.7; 93.35; 9.54.32; 13.14.136 *kālāgni* 1.49.24; 3.218.32; 4.64.14; 5.81.15; 174.23; 6.8.26; 15.12; 88.13; 7.14.5; 70.28; 8.34.14; 9.11.2; 12.273.7; 13.140.7; 145.29 *kālānala*—1.52.20; 3.216.14; 6.78.34; 96.50; 7.114.46; 172.6; 13.14.124 *kālavahni*—6.55.92 *kālajvalana*—7.141.29.

¹⁵ *ātadaṇḍa* is also used at 8.62.17 and *daṇḍa* is mentioned in relation to *Kāla* at 9.10.37.

¹⁶ Scheuer, *Ibid.*, p. 351 n.4, says this theophany shows Kṛṣṇa 'dans sa forme rudraïque'. However, although this may be relevant to the wider picture which Scheuer is dealing with, there is nothing in the text itself at this point to indicate a connection with Śiva for my purposes here (Scheuer's argument from the use of *ugrarūpa* in v.20 on this is too general to carry much weight).

¹⁷ Time is also mentioned as the destroyer in 1.202.18, when the world, attacked by demons, is described as 'empty... as if struck by time'—*kālena hatam yathā*.

¹⁸ 6.58.55.

¹⁹ This is made explicit, for example, in one case by reference to the death of Abhimanyu (7.55.19); and in another, by the context of a jackal and a vulture vying for the body of a dead child at a burning ground—*sarvena khalu martyaṃ martyaloke prasūyatā kṛtāntavihite mārge ko mṛtaṃ jīvayisyati* (12.149.10).

²⁰ For other examples, see also 12.160.43 and 13.3.4.

²¹ For other references to *Kālāntakayama* with cosmic connotations see: 8.11.30 (with the cosmic imagery emphasised in vs.12—*lokakṣayakarau*, 23—*prajāsaṃharāṇe*, 25—*prajānām saṃkṣaye*); 8.40.18; 12.160.43. For ambiguous references see, for example, 3.28.23; 138.12; 175.15; 297.9; 6.51.38; 87.7; 90.20; 7.95.19; 134.35; 8.35.18; 14.73.27. *Kālāntaka* appears in three other compounds also, all of which are ambiguous: *yamakālāntaka*—7.110.9 (discussed below); *antakālāntaka*—8.15.29; *mṛtyukālāntaka*—8.17.43.

²² C.f. also 7.100.39 and 9.3.6 for comparison with Rudra's pleasure grove, but here not qualified as *kālātyaye*; and 7.847*.1 (at 7.107.39), where the comparison is with Rudra's pleasure grove at the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice—*dakṣayajña—nibarhane*.

²³ 8.32.14 (of Arjuna) and 9.15.51 (of Yudhiṣṭhira). For similar examples see 4.App.49.17; 6.58.58; 59.16 (both of Bhīma) and 7.165.1.

²⁴ The battlefield is also compared to the dancing of Rudra in 8.21.42—*rudrasyaṇartanopamam*, although many variants give *ākṛīḍam*—pleasure grove.

²⁵ Aśvatthāman is also likened to Paśupati slaying beasts at 10.8.122—*paśuṃ paśupatir yathā*.

²⁶ See, for example, 7.130.35,38 where Bhīma is likened to Rudra on the battlefield and then lauded by his brothers on his return 'as the gods did Hara when he killed Andhaka'—*yathāndake pratinihate haram surāḥ*.

²⁷ *yamakālāntaka* is at 7.110.9; *yamāntaka* at 2.16.14; 5.135.20; 7.141.5.

²⁸ See, for example, 2.68.18, where Bhīma threatens Duryodhana's followers with *neśyāmi yamasādanam*; or 7.85.18, where Sātyaki, in mortal danger, is said to be *yamadaṃṣṭrāntaram gaṭam*. For discussion of the use of similar phrases in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, see J.L. Brockington *Righteous Rāma: the Evolution of an Epic* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 196f.

²⁹ See, for example, 3.12.43; 5.164.10; 185.5; 6.90.21; 7.92.38; 9.10.43.

³⁰ See, for example, 3.134.7.

³¹ See, for example, 5.35.61.

³² See, for example, 3.52.4-5; 5.98.4.

³³ It should be pointed out that *Kālārātri* herself, however, shares in the intrinsic ambiguity between universal and individual destruction found in all these terms, and her eschatological significance is nowhere clearly established in the text. Despite this, she is usually understood in this way: see, for example, Monier-Williams, who gives 'the night of all-destroying time; night of destruction at the end of the world' as the primary meaning, *Ibid.*, p. 278. He follows this with 'night

of a man's death', however, and she is certainly mentioned in conjunction with Yama as god of the dead in the *Śiva Purāṇa*, *Umā*, 7.54.

³⁴ Brockington discusses this tendency for similes to be 'piled up almost without regard to their relations with each other' in dramatic situations in, 'Figures of Speech in the Rāmāyaṇa', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 97, (1977), p. 442.

³⁵ For other mixed passages see 6.98.35,6, where Bhīma is compared to *daṇḍahasta ivāntaka* and then *rudra*; 8.11.30,31, where Bhīma and Aśvatthāman fighting each other are compared to *kālāntakayamopama/rudrau dvāv iva... yamau*; and 9.11.2,3, where *pāśahastam ivāntakam* is used next to *saśūlam iva haryakṣam*. In the *Saṃpṛīṭa* [10.8] Aśvatthāman is compared variously to *Kāla* [vs.8,44]; *Antaka* let loose by time [vs.39,71]; and Paśupati slaying living creatures [v.122]. Where references to Rudra/Śiva, etc. in these passages have cosmic connotations, they have already been discussed or cited in the section devoted to that deity.

³⁶ See, for example: A.B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, II, (Cambridge, Mass., 1925), p. 408 for early connections; A. Daniélou, *Hindu Polytheism* (New York, 1964), p. 132; S. Bhattacharjī, *The Indian Theogony* (London 1970), pp. 50ff; Scheuer, *Ibid.*, p. 298. The lexicographical evidence is also strong: for *Antaka*, Monier-Williams gives 'death; Yama, king or lord of death', *Ibid.*, p. 43; for *Kāla*, 'time, death, time of death (often personified and represented with the attributes of Yama... or even identified with him)', *Ibid.*, p. 278; for *Kṛtānta*, 'N. of Yama', *Ibid.*, p. 303. See also V.S. Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi, 1965), I, p. 118 (for *Antaka*) and I, p. 595 (for *Kṛtānta*).

³⁷ 39.13: *yamāya svāhāntakāya svāhā mṛtyave svāhā*.

³⁸ 6.46.2—(of sleep) *yamasya karaṇaḥ antako 'si mṛtyur asi*, repeated at 16.5.1.

³⁹ E.W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1915), p. 112 and see also pp. 75, 107 for further evidence of their connection with Yama. Sharma, *Ibid.*, p. 26, also suggests that Yama, *Antaka* and *Kāla* are synonyms in the epic.

⁴⁰ See, for example, *Matsya Purāṇa* 102.21; *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* x.78; *Līṅga Purāṇa* 1.30.1-25. W.D. O'Flaherty, *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* (Berkeley, 1976), p. 233 cites this as an illustration of the transference of *Kālāntaka* to Śiva, discussed below, but it also serves to illustrate the connections between *Kāla*, Yama and *Antaka* as virtually interchangeable names.

⁴¹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 232ff. O'Flaherty cites an example from the *Skanda Purāṇa* which illustrates the logic of this transference quite clearly: 'Then Śiva, the Destroyer of Kāla, looked at Kāla with his third eye and burnt him to ashes in order to protect the devotee' 1.1.32.4ff, cited p. 234.

⁴² See 13.14.161—*saṃhartā kāla eva ca*; and 8.263*.2—*kālo hi bhagavān rudraḥ*.

⁴³ See, for example, 1.189.2: 9.44.15; and 7.173.67, where *Kāla*, *Antaka*, Mṛtyu and Yama are, in fact, identified with Śiva in a eulogy, but as they are mentioned along with many other gods (Indra, Vayu, Aśvins, Sūrya, Varuṇa, etc.) the reference serves more to make the primary connection with Yama.

⁴⁴ As it is in the *Mbh* also, see, for example, 7.172.58—*sarvaharam*; 13.17.41—*haraḥ*.

⁴⁵ For the historical relationship between Yama and Śiva see, for example, A.B. Keith, *Ibid.*, p. 150, who discusses the probable connections between Rudra and Yama in the Vedic period; S. Bhattacharjī, *Ibid.*, p. 108; 206f, who argues for Yama's gradual absorption into the 'Śiva complex'; and W. O'Flaherty, *Ibid.*, pp. 232ff discussed above.

⁴⁶ This is seen, for example, in their tendency to use Vedic gods as the *upamāna*, a point noted by J. Brockington, *Ibid.*, p. 444. The nature of formulae in epic narrative has been studied much more in relationship to Greek epic, where their archaic nature was noted by Milman Parry: see “Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making II. The Homeric Language as the Language of an Oral Poetry”, in *The Making of Homeric Verse: Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, ed. A. Parry (Oxford 1971), in particular, pp. 329ff. C.M. Bowra also discussed in detail the general tendency of heroic formulaic similes to preserve ideas and details from much earlier eras, in *Heroic Poetry* (London, 1964), pp. 390ff. See, in particular, his argument that, ‘Formulae may... preserve relics of lost beliefs and outmoded theological ideas’, p. 397.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Arjuna’s encounter with Śiva in the form of the Mountain Man: 3.41.7ff, especially the reference back to this at 5.195.13; and passages where the idea of a triumvirate of gods begins to appear, with Rudra/Śiva in the destructive role, for example, 13.14.183-5 and 12.328.12. Apart from this, however, the identification is still not particularly strong, and the longer descriptions of the *pralaya*, where one might hope to see it made, throw little light on the subject.

⁴⁸ The theme of *EMH* 4.

Abbreviations

Mbh	Mahābhārata
EMH	Études de Mythologie Hindoue

PEARLS FROM BONES:
RELICS, CHORTENS, TERTONS AND THE SIGNS OF
SAINTLY DEATH IN TIBET*

DAN MARTIN

Summary

Although there has been much work, in recent years, on the *sacrum* of Christianity, and some important studies have appeared on Buddhist relic cults and related facets of Buddhism, so far very little has been written on Tibetan Buddhist relics. This paper, while offering some material for a historical perspective, mainly seeks to find a larger cultural pattern for understanding the interrelationships of a complex of factors active in Tibetan religious culture. Beginning with problems of relic-related terms and classifications, we then suggest a new assessment of the role of the Terton ('treasure revealer'). Then we discuss 'miracles' in Tibet, and the intersection of categories of 'signs of saintly death' and relics. Much of the remaining pages are devoted to those items that fall within both categories, specifically the 'pearls' that emerge miraculously from saintly remains and images that appear in bodily or other substances connected with cremations. After looking at a number of testimonials on these miraculous relics, we examine the possibility that these items might be 'deceitfully manufactured', looking at a few Tibetan polemical writings which raise this possibility. In the conclusion, we suggest that there are some critical links between three spheres of Tibetan religiosity: 1. *sacrum* which are not relics, 2. relics, and 3. signs of sainthood. Finally, we recommend an approach to religious studies that takes its point of departure in actual practices, and particularly the objects associated with popular devotional practice.

Tibetans have, and have had, very highly developed cults of relics, as does North African Islam and as did medieval Christianity, to give a few instances. The reasons are in all three cases approximately the same. Buddha, Muhammed and Jesus, regardless of other differences, all had human bodies; all died. All of them being, in some sense, revealers of historical religions, they as well as the later saints in their traditions have tended to sanctify everything and everyone with which or with whom they came into contact. This admitted, it will be rather obvious that the physical things in the most intimate association with them, in particular their physical remains (if available),¹ should above all be held worthy of the greatest respect and reverence. In the experience of the believer, however, the relics are no more merely passive and

unresponsive objects of worship than the living revealers or saints themselves could possibly be. Something palpable is given in return for their veneration, something we might call grace or blessing. What the Moroccan Maraboutist calls *baraka*² and the early medieval Christian might have called *charis* ('gift') or *dynamis* ('force', 'power'),³ a Tibetan would call *byin-rlabs*.

Byin-rlabs is commonly glossed as 'gift wave',⁴ but it more properly goes back to a literal translation of a Chinese word⁵ which was almost certainly made during the earliest introduction of Buddhism into Tibet in the seventh or eighth centuries. It is not a literal translation of the Sanskrit Buddhists term *adhiṣṭhāna*.⁶ Its actual, or rather its philologically correct, meaning is 'received by (way of) giving'. The believer receives a 'gift' from the saint (in person or in vision), relic or consecrated article. The nature of the 'gift' is and always will remain a mystery to those most secularly oriented persons who have existed in all times and places. For the sake of definition it will be sufficient for our present purposes to say that, no matter what qualities we may wish to include in our concept of sanctity or spirituality, this 'gift' is intended to assist in the development of those same qualities in the receiving individual. It is a gift that, indeed, depends on the receptivity of the individual (faith, and so forth), and hence the bafflement of the learned scholars confronted with this most popular religion practiced by adherents of all Tibetan schools. Sanctity is a quality possessed by particular persons and things. Therefore, to speak about 'the holy' without any reference to those things that are holy is equivalent, to my way of thinking, to discussing 'brilliance' without mentioning what sort of things might be brilliant, such as a lightbulb, an actor, a scientist, a reflection, or a sunset.

In contrast to the paucity of English words, Tibetan has two most commonly used words for relics in general and several less common ones. The first general term, *gdung*, or *sku-gdung*, is the honorific word for 'bone' (also, 'ancestry', 'clan') but its meaning is often extended to mean 'remains' in general. The other, *ring-bsrel*, means, etymologically speaking, 'kept for a long time', hence, 'cherished'. The English word 'relic', coming from Latin by way of French, means 'remains' or 'something left over'. One of the less common Tibetan terms is '*phel-gdung* ('increasing bone'), a word

which has a more restricted meaning. Another, *sha-rí-ram*, is a straight transliteration from the Sanskrit word for 'body', which is used in Tibetan interchangeably with *ring-bsrel*, both of these words (as well as *gdung*) occasionally having a more specific meaning. Finally, there is *byin-rten*.

*Byin-rten*⁷ is a contracted form of *byin-rlabs-kyi rten*, which we may translate, 'blessing support/receptacle'. The word *rten* is difficult to render precisely, having connotations of 'support, dependency, prop, container', and so forth. It is used in several terms which have a bearing on our subject. The Tibetan Buddhist world has three major classifications (sometimes increasing to five⁸) of things worthy of worship. The first is 'Body receptacles' (*sku-rten*), the images of Buddhas, deities and saints. The second is 'Speech receptacles' (*gsung-rten*), the words of Buddhas and saints embodied in sacred texts of all sorts. The third is 'Thought receptacles' (*thugs-rten*). This third is, for all intents and purposes, identical with the chorten (*mchod-rten*).⁹

The chorten is well known to many as the Tibetan counterpart to the *stūpa*, *caitya*, *dagoba* (from *dhātugarbha*, 'relic container'), pagoda, etc., of South, Southeast and East Asian architecture. Here we are not so concerned with the form of the chorten, which literally means 'worship' (*mchod*), 'receptacle' (*rten*) and functionally (also, I believe, in origin) acts as a reliquary, as with the objects it is meant to contain. Not all relics are always kept in chortens; but we may, I think more or less correctly, assume temporarily that everything that *is* placed inside a chorten is considered to be a relic. By examining what articles are included when a chorten is consecrated,¹⁰ we will have a fairly complete picture of what things have been classified as relics as well as a beginning toward discovering how different particular Tibetans or groups of Tibetans have subclassified them.

For this purpose, we may feel fortunate to have a large number of accounts of the construction of chortens by a wide variety of authors. These were written with the basic motive of cataloguing the materials, styles and workmanship used in their construction and thus memorializing the merit of the craftsmen and donors as well as the deceased saint in whose honor it might have been built, as well as eulogizing the chorten and its surroundings as a holy

place and describing the spiritual and other benefits to be derived from visiting it or doing the ritual circumambulations and so on. We will provide summarized samplings of some of these Guides, or 'Indices' (*dkar-chag*), which have been chosen in an attempt to represent all the Tibetan sects, beginning with one from the early seventeenth century. These have been placed in an appendix since, although they supply the basic starting points (the 'data') for much of our discussion, these listings of relics will not be of impelling interest to the majority of readers. A brief look at the appendix will be sufficient for most purposes.

What Does the Evidence Tell Us?

We will not be able to deal here with certain aspects of the relic cult in Tibet due, in part, to a shortage of information. At this stage, we could not pretend to give social science analyses along the lines of patron-client relations, community structures and so on. It is much more regrettable not to be able to supply evidence for the impact of relics on people, either as individuals or as social entities. (Pilgrimage Guides and biographies should prove helpful here.) Were miraculous healings at chortens as frequent a phenomenon as they were at medieval European saints' shrines? (At present, my impression is that they were not.) Did the role of relics in Tibetan culture change in significant ways over time? How do various aspects of the Tibetan relic cults relate to Indian, Chinese, or Khotanese (or other Central Asian) prototypes? Is there anything uniquely Tibetan about it?¹¹ These and many other questions, as important as they may be for a well-considered view of the subject, will have to find answers in the future, although some evidence supplied here may be found useful.

The evidence does tell us, first of all, that while all schools of Tibetan religion regard the same general sorts of things as relics, there seems to have been no generally accepted sub-classification scheme in use. Within the Gelugpa sect, there appears to have been a rather standard three- or four-fold classification, while the Nyingma (and possibly the Kargyudpa and Bonpo as well) preferred five-fold classifications. A much larger body of evidence would need to be collected in order to substantiate even this very basic statement.

By looking at the origins of the individual relics, we can easily detect sectarian affiliations. Lha-btsun's Guide contains mostly Nyingma, but also Kargyudpa, relics and nothing connected with other sects. Zhu-chen's Guide contains predominantly Sakyapa relics, and it does not include the 'images' or 'increasing bone' (with the exception of two from the Buddha, and this apparently for reasons of controversy to be clarified in due course). Gung-thang-pa's list emphasizes bodily and contact relics of Gelugpa saints, although not exclusively. Kong-sprul's Guide contains mostly Bonpo relics, but also consecrated articles and relics from all the other major sects, as we might expect, it being sponsored by a 'nonsectarian' (*ris-med-pa*).

As for the nature of the relics as such, they may mostly be described as the physical remains of the saints or things sanctified by close proximity to them. The special types which may not appear to fit with this description will be discussed later on. We may note that, with few exceptions, the saints in question are both male and clergy. There is only one bone relic derived from a woman. If we limit ourselves to clearly historical personages (excluding Buddhas, ancient sages, and so forth), there are about 57 cloistered religious men, seven lay or uncloistered religious men, and three 'holy madmen'. These numbers are *not* scientifically accurate, being based only on the material produced in evidence in the appendix, otherwise the proportion of cloistered religious men would be even higher.

Various bodily emissions constitute a significant minority of the relics: blood, urine, reproductive substances, mucus (handkerchiefs). Many of these relics, especially the testicles included in Lha-btsun's Guide, carry almost too obvious associations of vitality, reproduction and growth. The theme of an underlying vitality adhering to the mortal remains of saints finds its strongest expression in the miraculous multiplication of relics referred to as 'increasing bone' (*'phel-gdung*) which will be dealt with below. The closest to a European equivalent we can point to is the liquefaction of blood. Although not *really* equivalent, both are examples of how seemingly inert, 'dead' substances can take on life, especially in response to devotion directed their way.¹² In Tibetan Buddhism, the vitality of the relic is in no way reduced by its division and

translation. There is little hint of the resistance to the division of the saints' physical remains such as was noticeable in early medieval European relic cults.¹³ This undoubtedly reflects the fact that Tibetan Buddhists, like other Buddhists and unlike Christians, have no widely shared idea of bodily resurrection. The cremated remains of the Buddha Himself were immediately divided into eight portions. Ordinarily, dead bodies are quickly consigned to the elements (through burial, cremation, submersion or exposure, which may be understood as earth, fire, water and air 'burial'), although embalming is done in some extraordinary cases for highly regarded teachers (the embalming salts then becoming greatly valued as relics).

Finally, the Guides may tell us that the cults of saints were closely connected to the cults of holy places. While earth, stones, and plants from holy places are never included under the classification 'relic', yet they are mentioned in all the Guides studied, and this is surely not without significance. We may speak not only of 'relics of geography', but also of a geography of relics; for while relics most generally stay where they have been deposited, making pilgrimage necessary, they may also be moved, although this can hardly be done lightly, and this subject also deserves some attention in future comparative studies. Now we will have a few words to say about the movers.

The Categorical Distinction and the Role of the Terton

There are other remarkable things that should be observed from the evidence. One is that the Tibetan terms for 'relic', specifically *ring-bsrel* and *gdung*, have both a broad and a narrow meaning. In their broad meaning, they include more than one ordinary understanding of the word 'relic':

- 1) They include mantras, *dhâraṇī*, scriptures, and commentaries on scriptures; even the central pole of the chorten in view of the fact that it is always inscribed with *dhâraṇī*.
- 2) They include images:
 - A) Molded images of clay which is often mixed with remains of saintly bodies, clothing, etc. Called *tsha-tsha*, these images may be of small chortens, Buddhas, deities, saints, etc.

- B) Wood, stone, metal (etc.) images which, of course, may also contain saintly relics and/or *dhâraṇī*.
- C) Images (chortens, letters, etc.) formed on or from the remains. These are often formed of the same material as the objects in 4, below.
- 3) Although a somewhat distinct category, consecrated articles (*dam-rdzas*). This means especially consecrated pellets which sometimes include the following or other types of relics. Consecrated articles are not in themselves *ring-bsrel* (or *gdung*), but both together belong to the broad category of *byin-ten*.
- 4) They include *ring-bsrel* and *gdung* in the narrow sense, the so-called 'mustard seed like relics', or 'increasing bone'.

Ultimately we intend to focus on the fourth category, but first a few comments on the language problem with regard to the first two. These items are not 'relics' in our sense of the word, but it might be suggested that our failure to comprehend the fact that *in Tibet* they are included in the same classification with bones, teeth, hair, clothing, etc., of the saints has led to huge cultural misunderstandings in the works of outside scholars. Intractable differences in cultural values may underlie simple differences in categorization.

My case-in-point is the Rediscoverer of Hidden Treasure (Terma/*Gter-ma*), the Terton (*Gter-ston*/*Gter-bton*). This issue alone could be grounds for a book,¹⁴ so we will limit ourselves to little more than a hypothesis, since full substantiation would require a huge collection of evidence. Why was the Terton such a controversial figure? Was it because he, and (even if less frequently) she, dug up literary works of more-or-less questionable religious authority?

"Yes" and "No." "Yes," because we may easily question the authenticity of the Termas. "No," because that is not all there is to it. There were reasons why their authenticity was in question, reasons that may be more 'social' than 'theological'. If we use the term 'popular religion' to mean religious practices with significant social impact which arise from a broadly based popular appeal, and, at least in point of origin, are somewhat divorced from, if not at odds with, the established religious authorities, then 'popular religion' must mean above all the cults of saints (the cults of holy persons), the cults of relics (the cults of holy things) and pilgrimage (the cults of holy places). My hypothesis is that the Terton filled three important roles in the religious culture of Tibet: 1) Saint. 2)

Translator of relics. 3) Pilgrimage leader, or, to keep within a Tibetan terminological framework, opener of Hidden Countries (Sbas Yul). These Hidden Countries may be understood as 'rediscovered pilgrimage sites' although, in practice, the Tertön frequently became a 'translator' of populations, leading at times thousands of people on revelation-inspired migration-pilgrimages to previously unsettled 'promised' ('prophecied', to be more exact) lands.¹⁵

The key to this reassessment of the Tertön lies in the fact that the books they rediscovered were not, perhaps contrary to our cultural expectations, viewed primarily as literary works to grace library shelves, or even as rare 'first editions'. They were above all relics, either as objects owned by ancient sages or manuscripts written by their own hands. These books, as may be seen in a few instances in the chorten Guides summarized below, could be inserted into images or chortens prior to consecrations.¹⁶ It is surely not by chance that a large number of the Tertöns' finds were made in images, chortens, and temples;¹⁷ and usually together with all the other items Tibetans have called relics (*ring-bsrel*), consecrated articles (*dam-rdzas*), and images. To give just one of countless possible examples, when Ratna-gling-pa was about thirty-five years old (in 1438), he made the following rediscoveries together with several volumes of precepts and ritual propitiations at Dge-ri¹⁸ Brag-dmar.

Brahmin Flesh Pellets. Red and white reproductive substances. Elixir Pellets and [Long] Life Pellets. 'Increasing bone' from the heart of Pra-chen Ha-ti.¹⁹ 'Increasing bone' from the tooth of O-rgyan-chen-po [= Padmasambhava]. Hair and 'increasing bone' which came from the dried nasal blood (*shangs mtshal*, 'nose vermillion') of the Lady Mtsho-rgyal [the Tibetan wife of Padmasambhava]. Clothing and other articles belonging to the Guru [= Padmasambhava].²⁰

We would not make the claim that the Tertöns are *entirely* explainable as relic/pilgrimage entrepreneurs, only that this side of their character has been glossed over in the past. We feel confident that something close to this general picture of the Tertöns' role will emerge more clearly when detailed studies on the full-length biographies of major Tertöns such as are available for Ratna-gling-pa and Padma-gling-pa²¹ have been done. Meanwhile, we turn to the problem of an item which, we will agree, is certainly a 'relic'

in every sense of the word, but of which Euro-American cultural history has no experience. These are the 'pearls'.

The 'Pearls' as Sign of Saintly Death and Relic Par Excellence

We turn to the Nyingma tantra, the *Sku-gdung* 'Bar-ba ('Blazing Remains').²² It belongs to the highest of three classes within the highest of the Nine Vehicles of the Nyingma school—the Precepts Class (Man-ngag Sde) of the Ati-yoga Vehicle. It is one of the principal seventeen tantras of the Precepts Class. It is written in the form of a dialogue between the Buddha Vajradhâra and the Skygoer (*Mkha'-'gro-ma*) named Clear mind (Gsal Yid).

In chapter one, Clear Mind asks Vajradhâra about the signs of sainthood. Vajradhâra describes, in response, various physical marks which signify spiritual cultivation in previous lives, such as the mark of a conch on the shoulder, etc., symbols of the Body, Speech and Mind of the Buddha. In chapter two, various abilities signifying previous cultivation are described: the ability to remain unharmed in fire, to walk without sinking in the water, to walk without touching the ground; to travel in the sky, crossing the continent of Jambudvîpa at six hundred leagues a moment like wind, to pass through mountains and rocks, etc. Then there are signs experienced by highly developed yogis as preludes to the complete dissolution of the physical body into rainbow colored radiations.²³

These signs, the special marks on the body in chapter one, and the miracles of chapter two, may be understood respectively as those signs of sainthood which emerge at birth and those that accompany a saintly life. The third chapter, predictably, treats the signs of saintly death²⁴ which are:

- 1) *Images* left behind after cremation. Images of both peaceful and wrathful deities. These signify that the saint is to attain liberation in the after-death state.²⁵
- 2) 'Bone' (*gdung*). These are of five types:
 - A) *Sha-ri-ram* (Tathâgata type/center) are white, bright and transparent, forming in the fat. About the size of a pea, they develop from the bone marrow.
 - B) *Ba-ri-ram* (Vajra type/east) are blue-green and darkish. About the size of a mustard seed or small pea, they are formed from the essence of (digestive?) heat, emerging from the interstices of the ribs.

- C) *Chu-ri-ram* (Ratna type/south) are yellow colored. They are about the size of a mustard seed, forming in the blood, appearing on top of the liver.
- D) *Bse-ri-ram* (Padma type/west) are bright and red. Size is about that of a mustard seed. It forms from a combination of the elements, comes from the kidneys.
- E) *Nya-ri-ram* (Karma type/north). Sapphire blue, about the size of a mustard seed, formed from the essence of knowledges, it occurs on the lungs.²⁶

All five of these are generally formed in spherical shapes and transparent. *Ring-bsrel* are similar to these, only smaller, the size of sesame seeds or dust, and they may be destroyed by the elements, whereas *gdung* are indestructible. *Ring-bsrel* may come from the head, from the backbone or other joints, or from the skin and flesh.

3) *Lights* are of three types:

- A) Those that encircle the area around the corpse or the house in which it lies.
- B) Lights going up vertically.
- C) Lights shining from the ribs of the corpse.
- 4) Mysterious *sounds* coming from the different directions surrounding the corpse.
- 5) *Earth tremors* signifying different degrees of spiritual attainment depending on the number of days which elapsed since the death.
- 6) *Atmospheric phenomenon*. Rain, storms, hail, wind, mist, fog, rings around the moon, etc.

This third and final chapter ends as the audience expresses its appreciation for the answers given by Vajradhâra as, so to speak, the curtain falls. The work was translated and verified by the Indian Master Vimalamitra and the Tibetan translator Ka-ba Dpal-brtsegs.

The first category of signs, the images left behind after cremation, is known from a testimonial by a modern Mongolian Buddhist leader, speaking about things he observed in about 1923. *Sharil* is a Mongolian loan from Sanskrit (*śarīra*) with the broad and narrow meanings of the Tibetan *ring-bsrel*.

... when I was nine or ten years old and still residing at Serku Monastery in the Amdo region, I had a friend Monon Serku *gegen*, two years older than I. When he died and was cremated, I observed that his *sharil* (Skt. *śarīra*; a jewel-like deposit remaining after the cremation) was in the shape of an image of Yamdagha (Skt. Yamântaka), “Conqueror of Yama,” the supreme deity of hell and the protector of the Buddha’s Law. This phenomenon greatly astonished me, and I bowed in veneration to it. On another similar occasion, after the cremation of a venerable lama, I beheld that on the skull of his remains were imprinted three images of the Buddha. Manjushri (Skt. Mañjuśrî; Ch. Wen-shu *p’u-sa*) was situated in the middle, with Ariyabul

(the thousand handed Kuan-yin *p'u-sa* or Avalokiteśvara) on one side, and Ochirbani (Skt. Vajrapāṇi; Ch. P'u-hsien *p'u-sa*) on the other. This would have been difficult for me to believe had I not seen it with my own eyes. To this day I still marvel at this miraculous occurrence.²⁷

We have noticed some similar phenomena in the chorten Guides by Kong-sprul and Lha-btsun, both of which, we should point out, mention skulls with the Tibetan letter 'A' naturally formed on them.²⁸ We may see that these 'images' have been formed either directly out of the bone or from the substance now to be described.

The second category of signs, the *gdung* and *ring-bsrel* (= ringsel) are described by a contemporary western Buddhist and former nun based, in part, on her own observations.

Ringsel are small spherical relics, usually white, though sometimes manifesting the five colors, which emerge from the ashes of great teachers after their death or from sacred places such as Buddha statues or stūpas. It is said that they are brought forth by the devotion of the disciples, and that even when a very advanced practitioner dies, if there are no devoted disciples, there will be no ringsel. There are also cases of ringsel appearing after the ashes or bits of bones have been collected and kept for some time. Someone might have some remnants and keep them very devotedly and carefully, and after some time, look at them and they may have turned into ringsel. Ringsel also have the ability to reproduce. One of them gets bigger and bumps appear on the side and then the bumps become small ringsel. In 1970 the stūpa of Swayambhu in Kathmandu produced ringsel on the eastern side of the stūpa. There were thousands all over the ground and all the monastery, including the highest lama, who almost never left his room, were outside picking them up.²⁹

I fully realize that there will be some readers who will take the position that this source is too 'New Age' and therefore not admissible as evidence in the higher courts of academia. Against this somewhat condescending attitude, we present the following unimpeachably Tibetan testimony drawn from the memoirs of Rdo-ring Paṇḍi-ta. The circumstances surrounding this testimony hold their own fascination, but this story has already been summarized in English.³⁰ We will say only by way of introduction that Rdo-ring Paṇḍi-ta and the other Tibetan officials mentioned here were under official arrest by the Nepalese government at the time the following event took place (in about June 1792). This is all part of the very complex chain of events that developed in the course of Tibetan-Nepalese hostilities.

Then, on the full moon holiday of Saga Dawa, 'three holidays in one',³¹ I together with the Minister (Bka'-blon) G.yu-thog, Snya'-nang Sho-pa, Rgyal-rtse Sne-stod-pa, Bkras-lhun Thang-smad Nor-dbang, and the Sa-skya Secretary, all the nobles and servants together, were doing prostrations, circumambulations, and aspiration prayers at the great chorten Bya-rung-kha-shor (Bodhanath).³² First I alone found a piece of 'increasing bone' ('*phel-gdung*) about the size of a 'fish eye'³³ on the circumambulation path on the east side of the great chorten. After that I and all the others started looking for them. There were then to be gathered various sizes of increasing bone, *sha-rī-ram*, 'fish eyes' and so forth on top of the stepped levels (*bang-rim*) beneath the 'vessel' (*bum-pa*), and on the circumambulation path. A few times some of them fell down from the thirteen disks ('Dharma wheels') of the spire and from the vessel part at the center of the chorten proper with a plunking sound, and people saw this with their own eyes. We told the village people and monks from the Red Hat Lama's monastery that they should get some quickly, but not so many were found. In all there were about thirty of these 'increasing bone' which we obtained as supports of our faith, and they remain in our possession even now.

On the next and following days, we as well as others searched for them daily, but despite our efforts not a single one was found. This was quite clearly a miracle for confirming our faith and for producing great blessings.³⁴

There are countless similar testimonies to be found in Tibetan literature on *ring-bsrel* emerging from a variety of objects. Here are a few instances from the biography of the famous Sakya scholar Rong-ston Shes-bya-kun-rig (1367-1450?) which was written in 1474. When some time had passed after Rong-ston's death, the big toenail of his right foot was found to have entirely transformed into a substance like mother of pearl. Another person had procured a tooth of the saint which later turned into a substance with the appearance of amber, and it gave birth to hundreds of *ring-bsrel* which finally filled up its container. Still another person received a tooth which immediately produced a *ring-bsrel*. Later, a single *ring-bsrel* appeared on the same spot, and after it fell another appeared there.³⁵

The following example is quite intriguing for the fact that it comes from an interesting episode in Buddhist history that is always ignored in the general surveys. In the late thirteenth century, in Tabriz (in the extreme northwest of Persia, and just to the west of the south end of the Caspian Sea), the Mongol ruler Arghun was a great supporter of both Buddhism and Buddhist monks. The following took place in April of 1288 A.D.

Buka's envoys brought back with them to Persia one of the relics so much esteemed among the Buddhists, called Sharil. These are hard pieces of a

substance which is said to be found in the ashes of some saintly persons when cremated. Von Hammer says that Buddha's heart was supposed to be made of bone and not of flesh, similarly with the hearts of great men, and that the sharil is really held to be the ossified heart of the cremated person. Arghun, we are told, treated this relic with the greatest honour, gold was strewn over it, while a feast was duly celebrated.³⁶

The naturally formed images and 'pearls' or 'increasing bone' (*'phel-gdung*) have some things in common. They both may come from cremated bodies.³⁷ But the 'pearl' phenomenon is not limited to a cremation context. 'Pearls' are also produced by living persons, from their skin and particularly their hair. Sometimes they are said to form from blood. They may, as in Kong-sprul's Guide, be found on a tooth. They can come out of chortens or images. Another thing the images and 'pearls' share is that both belong to two otherwise distinct conceptual categories in religious life. They both tend to belong equally to the category of relics and the category of 'signs of saintly death'. We would argue that it is precisely this intersection of categories that lends the 'pearls' their unique place in the Tibetan cult of relics. Add to this their smallness and relative availability to individual believers; their insertion into images and chortens where, like other relics, they would normally be wrapped and labelled to preserve knowledge of the saint who produced them;³⁸ and their use as a kind of death-bed sacrament.³⁹ All this amounts to a fairly large cultural weight for what is, in actuality, a very small globe-shaped mass of tiny crystals which I have personally handled and observed, to all appearances in the process of growing out of both hairs and bones. They are said to be continually produced long after the cremation in the case of bones and after cutting in the case of hair. There are several possible naturalistic explanations which we will not explore here, concerned as we are with the classical Tibetan view in which they might be either miraculous or fraudulent.

Disputing Relics

Fraudulent? Tibet, too, has had its skeptics. We have an early and detailed criticism of 'popular religion'⁴⁰ penned by the founding father of Tibetan scholastic method, Sa-skyā Paṇḍi-ta Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan (1182-1251).⁴¹ He was the proponent, perhaps

the most prominent Tibetan proponent, of a Buddhism squarely based on both textual authority (scriptures) and reason. His work called *The Classifications of the Three [Types of Buddhist] Vows* takes an especially hard line against those who advocate instant or 'singly caused' Enlightenment (what he calls *dkar-po gcig-thub*), including those who make such extraordinary claims as, 'circumambulating a chorten once is sufficient.'⁴² His criticism of popular religion (cults of holy places included) is found in a context which underscores his strong, even passionate, concern for philological propriety in religion. Just preceding the passage which is translated below is found a discussion on various scriptures then extant in Tibet which he considered apocryphal or otherwise unreliable; while immediately following are discussions of various Indian Buddhist terms which were, according to him, either wrongly rendered by Tibetan translators or wrongly etymologized by Tibetan scholars. Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta may be a 'skeptic' in this passage, but he is not questioning the possibility or actual occurrence of these amazing phenomenon so much as he is questioning their etiology and significance according to *popular* ('foolish' or 'childish', to use his own words) interpretations.

The reasons why *ring-bsrel*, hearts and tongues,⁴³ images⁴⁴ and so forth emerge from the remains of cremated saints needs to be investigated a little. The *ring-bsrel* of the three types of saints emerge through the force of their saintly qualities. As receptacles for the merit of embodied beings,⁴⁵ these emerge [genuinely] like jewels from a [definite] origin.⁴⁶ Some *ring-bsrel* are made by malicious *gdon* spirits. Others emerge [naturally] from the four elements. There are, as well, some which are brought into being as faith producing manifestations by deities who delight in the Buddha's teachings. But nowadays the majority of *ring-bsrel* are deceitfully manufactured.⁴⁷ Hence, the distinctions between these types must be examined by the wise [the scholars].

The emerging of hearts, tongues, images and so forth is not preached in Buddhist scripture.⁴⁸ Still, generally speaking, all these things are deceitfully manufactured. Even if they were genuine, there is no scriptural authority or rational method for distinguishing genuine from manufactured, hence the difficulty of establishing whether or not they are positive signs.

The dawning of several suns, the approximation of windows in space, rainbows at night, lights radiating from a corpse, sudden visions of deities and spirits, the nondeceitful dripping of *ring-bsrel* from a living person's body...⁴⁹ Such things the foolish may take for positive signs, but if wise persons saw such things, they would know them to be signs of impediments.⁵⁰ While the foolish may be amazed at images crying, walking, dancing, or uttering words; at showers of blood, sound of donkeys braying beneath the ground, animals speaking human tongues, and so on,⁵¹ if wise persons perceive such

things, they know that enemies are invading the country, or that other calamities are headed their way. When people perceive things of this nature, they would do well to consult the wise.

These are just a few examples of common misinterpretations.⁵²

Although it may seem a bit of an irony, the death and cremation of Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta himself was accompanied, according to his biographers, by various miraculous signs, including those same 'images' which he had averred were not taught in Buddhist scripture. In the version of his life according to the *Sa-skya'i Gdung-rabs* by Kun-dga'-bsod-nams, completed in 1509 A.D., the signs at his death included banners of victory, instrumental and vocal music, and earth tremors. When his body was cremated, the smoke made rainbows and there were sounds of instrumental music which everyone present heard. His remains for the most part turned into all sorts of naturally produced divine images and *ring-bsrel*.⁵³ Kun-dga'-bsod-nams now cites a previous biography by one Yar-lung-pa Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan:

On the middle of his 'crown protuberance' there occurred distinct and perfect images of Hevajra and Mañjuḥṣa. In the area of the forehead bone was the [deity] assemblage of Cakrasamvara. On a piece of his collarbone was the Buddha Bhagavan. On his shoulder bone was a Khasarpāṇi. In the hollow of his foot was an Avalokiteśvara. On sections of his backbone were the four 'secret mothers' (*gsang-ba'i yum*, i.e., consorts). On his knee bones were Tārā and Acala. On the fingers of his right hand were images of Maitreya with the gesture of turning the Wheel of Dharma [seated] above a *nāga* tree. These ten [just listed] occurred as Body receptacles. The melodious speech of Brahma—lion's roar of Voidness—the letter 'A', symbol of nonorigination, appeared in relief [this being the Speech receptacle]. Above his two ears were two Namgyal chortens. [There was] a Samaya [instrument] Vajra marked in the center with [the syllable] Hūṃ. His pure thoughts and intentions emerged as self-produced Dharmakāya [the Mind receptacle]. Besides these, an incalculable number of various sorts of *ring-bsrel* occurred.⁵⁴

As this quote makes clear, Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta's failure to find scriptural authority for 'images' did not put a stop to them, and this fact was not missed by later critics.

One of the few persons in Tibetan history who argued against the views expressed by Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta, but especially against his later commentators, was Mkhas-dbang Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje (1569-1645), a scholar of the Drukpa Kargyudpa school. In one of his polemical works, most of them aimed at Mang-thos Klu-sgrub-

rgya-mtsho (1523-1596) and his students, he comments on Sa Paṇ's passage on relics. The general work⁵⁵ is mainly given to the subject of holy places, especially those two places in Tibet which were most sacred to the Kargyudpa—Mount Kailash in western Tibet and Tsari in the Assam borderlands in the east.⁵⁶ Both were believed to be identical to holy places mentioned in the *Cakrasamvara* and other tantras, a belief to which Sa Paṇ, needless to say, did not subscribe.⁵⁷ Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje discusses a few lines at a time, and since it would not suit our purposes to reproduce the statements of Sa Paṇ once more, the following is meant to convey the substance of his critical response. Direct translations are enclosed in double quote marks, the remainder being paraphrased.⁵⁸

When Sa Paṇ says that the *ring-bsrel* of saints emerge through force of their saintly qualities, Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje responds, "True." To the statements on their being produced by malicious spirits, the four elements or deities, the answer is, "Half-true." When Sa Paṇ says that most *ring-bsrel* nowadays are deceitfully manufactured and that they must be distinguished by scholars, Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje cries "Foul!"

"Of course, if the scholars honestly look into the problem, they will know," Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje says, "but even we confused 'fools' can figure it out if we look into it." But what Sa Paṇ is really doing here is casting aspersions on the many stories of variously colored *ring-bsrel* which occurred as signs of the spiritual accomplishments of the past Kargyudpa masters. What he is really saying here when he says, "Nowadays the majority of *ring-bsrel* are deceitfully manufactured," is this: 'If these supports of worship occur in my case, they are not to be included.' We could just as well argue that these *ring-bsrel* [of Sa Paṇ], even if not deceitfully manufactured, might belong to the other classes of those made by malicious spirits, the four elements, or deities.

"There have indeed been those few who take *gangs-thig* ('snowdrop' stone), pearls, etc. wrap them in cloth and place them in a reliquary box announcing that these are *ring-bsrel*. These people shouldn't just be scolded, when even fists would be appropriate."

On the statements about hearts, tongues and 'images' not being taught in Buddhist scriptures, he responds by citing the passage which we have just translated on the images that occurred on the bones of Sa Paṇ himself. An empiricist, he pits the weight of repeated observation against Sa Paṇ's scripture-based rationalism:

"All sorts of divine images, letters, deity insignia (*phyag-mtshan*) and 'increasing bone' composed of small bones, resinous exudations, ashes and stones from the funerary pyres have adhered to the remains of many of the masters of India and Tibet. Both talk about these as well as the articles themselves have formed objective spheres of the sense organs." He makes an

example of the relics of Rgya-ras-pa. “The great intellectuals have trouble knowing what to make of such reports. [Sa Paṅ] added these misleading verses which make the contrary [opinion] more obvious and without at all thinking, involves himself in a mass of contradictions. Is he saying about these divine images, which were not preached in Buddhist scriptures, but which have nevertheless been engendered from the remains of our lamas, that they are all deceitfully manufactured? Even if we took such a possibility for a fact, since there is no scriptural authority or rational method to decide one way or the other, we could not pretend to establish their goodness or say that they are bad. Knowing this, we must count these ways that Body, Speech and Mind receptacles occur as being among the great miracles. Therefore, to assert that they are all false is like a deer chasing a mirage. It [the argument] will lead to nothing but exhaustion.

“The *Blazing Remains Tantra*, which is counted among the Old Translations, explains how hearts, tongues and images as well as entire heads emerge whole [from the cremation fire]. If true, how could he write that they are not taught in Buddhist scripture? And if he did not accept this tantra as a valid scripture, he should have in the first place critically examined it. Therefore people’s arguments about the goodness or badness [of these signs] are in broad terms only [arguments about] existence or nonexistence, and they thereby commit one of the ‘four extremes’ [to be avoided in Buddhist philosophy].”⁵⁹

Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje goes on to discuss the other miracles mentioned by Sa Paṅ. Going back to the scriptural sources on the crying, walking, dancing and talking images, Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje finds that those sources are talking specifically about images of ‘wordly deities’ (deities who assist or hinder worldly goals rather than aiding toward the ultimate goal of Enlightenment). Consecrated images of transworldly deities [to the contrary] perform such actions as part of the Emanation Body deeds of Buddhas, in order to aid and encourage people in their quest for Enlightenment. About the other miraculous occurrences, Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje says that they are, after all is said and done, *miracles*, and as such they are naturally difficult things to explain even if one *does* ask the scholars about them.

While the former arguments were part of a larger debate between the Sakyapa and Kargyudpa sects, the following is from a debate between the Sakyapa (?) ’Bri-gung Dpal-’dzin, and a Nyingma apologist, Sog-bzlog-pa. The argument on the nature of ‘signs of saintly death’ takes a slightly different twist. Dpal-’dzin (as cited by Sog-bzlog-pa) wrote in his circular entitled ‘How to Distinguish What Is and Is Not Dharma’ [*Chos dang Chos-ma-yin-pa Rnam-par Dbye-ba’i Rab-tu Byed-pa*]:

Some say that the adherents of Great Perfection are Buddhist (Chos) because of good signs at their funerals. These good funeral signs to which they refer have their textual authority in what sūtra or tantra? When the Completely Perfect Buddha[s], the Arhats and other saints died it is said that there were *bad* omens such as earthquakes, a nearby fire (? *phyogs tshig*), shooting stars and winds. When great personages such as these pass away, it means the merit of creatures is used up. Therefore it is right that such [bad omens] as these should occur. When one has been reborn in the divine realms [i.e., *not* a saint!] flowers fall. Images, letters, hearts, tongues and eyes do not occur [in the case of] saints. Images, letters, hearts and tongues do occur [in the case of] Bonpos who despise Chos.⁶⁰

The reply of Sog-bzlog-pa:

“The relics (*ring-bsrel*) of the three [types of] saints emerge through the strength of their [saintly] qualities.” This backing by the scriptural authority of the sūtras is sufficient [in the case of *ring-bsrel*]. The occurrence of images and letters is [however] one of the things that sets tantras apart from sūtras.

The Reverend Lord [Atiśa] said, “Deity images occur to those who have [mastered] the Generation Stage. For those of pure conduct there are rainings of flowers. For Bodhicitta, *ring-bsrel* drip out. To show the actual meaning of the external and internal sensory potentialities (*skye-mched/āyatana*), the letter ‘A’ [occurs]. For Nonreturners (Phyir-mi-ldog-pa/Anāgāmin), a spiraling conch [occurs]. In the case of [Bodhi]sattvas who have not abandoned *saṃsāra*, hearts and tongues occur.” This and more may be found explained in the [*Bka’-gdams*] *Glegs-bam*⁶¹ itself.

It may well be that when great personages pass away, bad signs occur because the merit of creatures is used up. But also receptacles of Body, Speech and Mind occur for the multiplying of their own liberated saintly qualities as well as of the merit of those whom they are meant to help. The Reverend Sa-skyā Paṇḍi-ta had a Hevajra [image] in the middle of his *uṣṇīṣa*, a Khasarpāṇi on his shoulder along with a great many other deity images. The Lord of Beings, Gtsang-pa Rgya-ras-pa had twenty-one images of Avalokiteśvara on twenty-one sections of his backbone. The learned Gung-ru⁶² had the long *Aṣṭa* mantra in raised relief on his skull. There have been an unimaginable number of spiritual teachers who had: the letter ‘A’ showing the actual meaning of the external and internal sensory potentialities; the *Oṃ Aḥ* and *Hūṃ* which are supports of Body, Speech and Mind; the six syllables (*Oṃ Maṇi-padme Hūṃ*) and so forth. One may know by looking at their individual biographies how many of the great personages of the past [had such signs] including the peerless doctor from Dwags-po (Sgam-po-pa) who had heart and tongue [unburnt]. Well now, how can you [Dpal’dzin] not think that these are good [signs]?⁶³

One main point that emerges from these polemical statements is that Tibetan thinkers have not been unanimous in their views about the significance of relics and signs of saintly death. Neither were they unanimous about the ‘authority’ of scriptures and other writings (such as saintly biographies). Charges of fraudulence were

mainly exchanged along sectarian lines as footnotes to larger disagreements. The scripture-based rationalist can accept only miracles with their source in scripture, while the empiricist can say little in reply except that these things happen, with or without direct scriptural justification. We might argue together with the empiricist position that nuclear explosions have happened, even if there is no direct scriptural passage which could ‘prove’ them. On another hand, the arguments might lead us to reflect on some sober issues of religious studies—How much is the actual practice of a religion prescribed by its scriptures? What aspects of religious culture might be missed by comparative religionists who insist on limiting themselves to the study of scriptures? What do we gain by giving this one word ‘scripture’ to religious books which might mean different things to different people, even within a single religion or tradition? Students of religious culture might naturally feel more affinity with the Tibetan empiricists on this issue while, no doubt, the learned philologists, with their concern for textual propriety similar to that of Sa Paṇ, will find this discussion slightly unsettling. Now we will look at another work that some Tibetan Buddhists would treat as ‘scripture’ while others would not.

Making Relics

There is a text from the collected rediscoveries of the Terton Padma-gling-pa⁶⁴ which, we are given to believe, came from the hand of Dga’-rab-rdo-rje, the founder of the Nyingma Ati-yoga lineages, giving directions on how to produce *ring-bsrel*. It is, in several ways, an exasperating text which I will summarize as well as I am able. First, it tells the importance of realizing the first two of the ‘four appearances’ (*snang bzhi*)⁶⁵ according to the Crossover (*Thod-rgal*) teachings of the Precepts Class of Ati-yoga in order to bring about the transformations in the body which will produce *ring-bsrel* for the sake of the faithful. Then a *sādhana* description begins. It requires the use of a skull in which five mantras and five drawings are to be inscribed with an ink composed of herbal essences and liquid gold. Inside the skull (or skulls) is to be placed [a?] *ring-bsrel* of a Sugata (Buddha or saint) or at least one that is definitely from a Siddha (yoga practitioner with magical powers).

The Five Good Medicinal Herbs⁶⁶ are wrapped in pieces of cloth and arranged upon the five inscribed mantras. Basic rituals are prescribed, and a mantra given which is to be recited through a seven day retreat.

When good results are achieved, attach the *ring-bsrel* to your arm-pit without anyone seeing you. Then, either for yourself or someone else, when it is time to die and the signs of death are complete, take those same *ring-bsrel* and, thinking they are the essence of all Tathâgatas, put them in the throat. When the body is cremated, there will be a stack of *ring-bsrel*. If you want images, take a naturally occurring image and do as above; place them in the throat, and so they will emerge at cremation. Keep these deeds secret. If someone sees or hears these things, bad people will make exaggerated talk and those with wrong views will increase their accumulation of sin. This being secret mantra, do it in secret. This was written by Dga'-rab-rdo-rje for the sake of increasing the Buddha's teaching, hidden by Padmasambhava, and brought out of the chorten at Samye by Padma-gling-pa.

This work seems to convey an attitude in which certain deceptions are approved of for the promotion of faith. Indeed, Padma-gling-pa was one of the most controversial of Tertons, and he often had to defend himself against charges of fraudulence.⁶⁷ Which is not to belittle him. His autobiography is, for instance, one of the most extraordinary and colorful pieces of Tibetan (and Bhutanese) literature. If read carefully, this text on making *ring-bsrel* does not make all *ring-bsrel* out to be purposefully manufactured in order to induce faith in the faithful; in fact, the process of making them requires the use of a genuine *ring-bsrel* (or image), the multiplication of which does not seem to be explained by the ingredients used. We have what looks like a clear case of using a miracle to produce a miracle.

An earlier Tibetan text, written in about 1170 to 1190 by Zhang G.yu-brag-pa Brtson-'grus-grags-pa (1123-1193) also tells a way of 'making' *ring-bsrel* (here called *sha-ri-ram*), but in a very devotional context. The text we are about to cite is one of a set of seven texts with the collective title 'Seven Expedients [for Developing Devotion toward] the Lama' (Bla-ma'i Lam-khyer Bdun). Before citing in his support an otherwise unknown tantra,⁶⁸ he says,

Yogis, when their Lama has passed away, [should] take his powdered bones (*gdung-rus-kyi phye-ma*), place a syllable Hûm made of gold in the middle, and attach this to the neck or at the top of the head. Worshipping and making prayers at intervals, when they have purity of intent toward the result that they desire, in seven years the bones (*gdung*) will increase (*'phel-ba*) into an incalculable [number of] *sha-ri-ram*.

A late nineteenth century medical missionary in Mongolia, the Reverend James Gilmour, including *ring-bsrel* in his list of frauds consciously perpetrated by lamas. Of course, as a missionary, he had reasons of his own for making such charges:

When famous lamas die and their bodies are burnt, little white pills are reported as found among the ashes, and sold for large sums to the devout, as being the concentrated virtue of the man, and possessing the power of insuring a happy future for him who swallows one near death. This is quite common. I heard of one man who improved on this, by giving out that these pills were in the habit of coming out through the skin of various parts of the body. These pills called *sharil*, met with a ready sale, and then the man himself reaped the reward of his virtue, and did not allow all the profit of it to go to his heir.⁶⁹

Although we may seem to be stacking the evidence in favour of fraudulence, I personally do not believe that the cynical view is necessarily the correct one. I think of these things rather as anomalies, not yet investigated in any systematic way by natural sciences, but meanwhile their occurrence is perfectly acceptable to my generally rational if somewhat pragmatic way of thinking. Still, I acknowledge that these anomalies ('miracles', if you will) could, due to their popular appeal, encourage imitations or 'reproductions' after the fact.

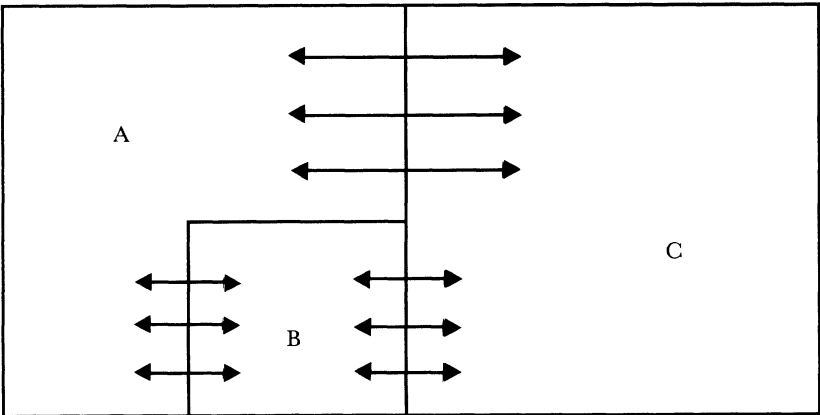
There is at least one other analogous phenomenon in Tibetan religious culture which is not a relic *per se*, but rather a consecrated article. We refer to what is known as the Mani Pellet (Ma-ñi Ril-bu). This Mani Pellet is produced during a religious service, usually lasting several days, the relatively wellknown "Mani Rimdu" (Ma-ñi Ril-bsgrub) of Nepal's Sherpas being one such ritual. Its ingredients, primarily wheat flour, must include, according to one source,⁷⁰ both *ring-bsrel* and a Mani Pellet made previously. The 'mother' pellet is capable of giving birth to a number of smaller 'baby' pellets, a phenomenon I have not observed.⁷¹ Unlike *ring-bsrel*, Mani Pellets are non-crystalline, smooth, light or reddish brown and somewhat asymmetrically

spherical. Evidently the ‘baby’ pellets emerge from their ‘mother’ pellets in the same way in which the *ring-bsrel* emerge and ultimately detach themselves from the bone or hair. These pellets are decidedly not reproduced under conditions of extreme heat.

A Conclusion, or, It May Be Best Not to ‘Conclude’ Too Much

In summary, a considerable range of cultural phenomena and popular beliefs have crystallized around the cults of relics in Tibet. If we students of Tibetan culture have so far failed to realize any general portraits of this complex of beliefs, objects, and practices, it is, to my mind, not only because we have failed to predict it, but also because we find certain of its manifestations extreme, distasteful, or, so to speak, culturally surprising.⁷² Perhaps it is because of our own cultural experience with similar phenomena.

Protestant Christianity in particular has led us toward a view of scripture as the source of all presently available religious inspiration. Except for a few relatively logocentric Tibetan scholars, here represented by Sa-skya Paṇḍita, Tibetan religious life as a whole has recognized scripture as a contingent and integral part of a broad array of sacred items, including temples and chortens, humanly-made as well as ‘natural’ (self-produced) images, and things we would recognize as relics. ‘Relics’ in the Tibetan case is a broader category than our own, often including scriptural texts, images, *tsha-tsha*. Consider the following simple chart for a moment.



The square of A which is inclusive of square B represents the holy things in Tibetan Buddhism. A exclusive of B represents the holy things that are not relics, while B represents relics, and C represent signs of sainthood or what is practically its synonym here, 'miraculous events'. But the category walls that we have charted out in black and white prove to be semipermeable membranes. Mediating between A and B are: 1. Scriptural volumes that are also relics of contact by virtue of belonging to a saint. 2. Scriptural volumes that are bodily relics because bodily relics of saints have been used for the ink, etc. 3. Chortens (and temples) that contain relics of all types. 4. Images and *tsha-tsha* that contain relics of various types. 5. Images that are relics of contact, or images that have been thoroughly identified with saints (such as the excavated 'representatives', *sku-tshab*, or more generally images 'made from life'). 6. Sacramental pellets which may contain some hints of various relics.

Bridging the divide between relics (B) and miraculous events (C) are: 1. *ring-bsrel* or 'increasing bone' (*'phel-gdung*). 2. Images formed on or of bodily relics. 3. Hearts, tongues, and eyes that emerge intact from the cremation fires.

Although less emphasized here, there are bridges between non-relic holy things and miraculous events, such as talking images or images produced 'naturally', signs of sainthood such as imprints of hands and feet in solid rock, and so forth.

Finally, once the visual impact of the chart has done its work, the boundaries may be permitted to dissolve, leaving a single sphere of substantives and verbs standing for the holy substances and occurrences of Tibetan Buddhism. The logical subject of all possible sentences that might be generated from these particular nouns and verbs is, of course, the holy person, the Buddhas and the whole range of other Buddhist saints.

Although there can be no culturally *unbound* way of arguing for or against a culture-bound attitude (and this holds true for 'scientific' attitudes in all their varied, temporary expressions), I would argue that our typical attitudes toward the cults of relics of past and present in our own and other cultures is not due to our lack of cultural relics. We are all collectors of relics of some sort or another. Rather, we have these attitudes because we no longer have any strongly shared popular cults of *saints*.⁷³

If saint recognition lies behind these relic-related cultural complexes, then there is, in addition, a third factor behind recognized sainthood. We refer to that inexplicable phenomenon which forms the basis for the shared popular recognition of saints, to those mysteriously diffusing spiritual influences which are the social contributions of these strange, often reclusive and sometimes at least superficially antisocial creatures. These blessings, these 'gifts',⁷⁴ are the bedrock of all the cultural classifications and practices outlined in this paper. Our failure to recognize their power hampers even our less *matter*-ialistic attempts at social analysis precisely because we do not see what it is that *matters* most in the subject we want to investigate. It requires a basic acknowledgement of this power to render the extreme manifestations, which may be as shocking to the everyday normalities of their home culture as they would be to others, intelligible. It is the living blessing of the saint that touches us when we come in contact with the relic, presuming some measure of openness, of faith. As an anonymous Tibetan author of the thirteenth century said, employing characteristically Tibetan metaphors,

If the white glacier of veneration has not formed,
from where will the flowing streams of blessings come? ⁷⁵

Popular religion, plainly put, has the capacity to widen the margins of our intellectual as well as social outlooks; it strains our credulity as well as our perception of our responsibilities which seem so strongly outlined in our individual 'social contracts'. It is hinged with imagination, beliefs, practices and sometimes even 'material' objects not so well covered by the usual understandings of the situations we find ourselves in. This gives it an important transformational role in the social *and* intellectual spheres, not only in the private religious lives of individual believers.

Although the point is arguable, I would at least advance for the sake of argument that we students of comparative religion have too often looked for the source of the 'holy' in abstract concepts and revealed words because of our own personal fondness for abstract concepts and books. We sit embroiled in scholastic wranglings about the nature of the *Alâyavijñâna*, the *Dharmakâya* or the Holy Spirit, while Tenzin the yak herder circumambulates the neighborhood chorten telling his beads. Of course, Sonam the

government official and some monks from a nearby monastery are right there behind him. Who understands the 'holy' better? We scarcely consider that we may be looking too hard and too far for something Tenzin and Sonam know is right here with us. This seems to be what we are really talking about when we invoke the words 'popular religion', or is it perhaps something different from 'real' religion? What do historians know about sacred *presence*? In actuality, we share similar ideas about the identity of these particular pearls no matter how far away from them talk and controversy and historical sifting seem to have taken us, but we disagree about the nature of the bones from which they come. At the very least, all this talk about 'popular religion' could help lead us toward more self-critical and serious considerations on the identity of the swine before whom they should not be thrown. They, too, may be us, since miracles do tend to dissolve at the touch of those whose worldview finds no place for them.

Appendix: Data on Tibetan Relics

Guide to the Sikkimese Chorten Named Sku-'bum Mthong-ba Rang-grol

This Guide, written by Lha-btsun Nam-mkha'-'jigs-med (1597-1653 A.D.),⁷⁶ opens with a eulogy on the area surrounding the chorten, noting such features as a naturally formed clay chorten with drops of elixirial *nāga*-water on it, the mere touching or tasting of which will clear up an aeon's accumulation of defilements.⁷⁷ Surrounding this are four 'thrones' blessed by the Guru (Padmasambhava) with hand and foot prints and likenesses of the eight auspicious symbols in relief. The surroundings are like the eight great cemeteries,⁷⁸ filled with yogis, spirits, cannibals and animals including leopards, bears and poisonous snakes. Scents of sandalwood and camphor are in the air. The local human and animal inhabitants have few desires, a sense of satisfaction. They have no possessiveness toward their houses and wealth. They have no miserliness, no stinginess.

Several wealthy people built this chorten as prophecied by Padmasambhava in this place which is, in its non-vital aspects,⁷⁹ a divine palace, its 'vital' inhabitants constituting a mandala of divinities. Its building was accompanied by dream signs as well as

external signs: letters of the alphabet falling from the sky in a dream consecration, a rainfall during the actual consecration ceremony, etc.

Now the chorten itself is described. The contents are listed below under the categories employed by the text itself:

1) Tantric *dhâraṇī*:⁸⁰ In the uppermost tip, the Btags-grol Mthong-grol of Ati-yoga Tantra⁸¹ and the five great *dhâraṇī* including that of Uṣṇīṣa[vijâya].⁸² In the base of the *harmikâ* ('bre), *dhâraṇī* of the deities of Mahâ-, Anu-, and Ati-yogas...⁸³

2) The insertion of scriptures and relics (*ring-bsrel*): 'Increasing bone' ('*phel-gdung*) of Śākyamuni Buddha. In the base of the spire, a tooth of Śāriputra⁸⁴ and bones of Sangs-rgyas-gling-pa.⁸⁵ In the bulge of the 'vessel' (*bum-pa/kum-bha*):⁸⁶ 'increasing bone' from the White Chorten at Samye (Bsam-yas)⁸⁷ as well as from Rgyal-rtse⁸⁸ and Rtse-la-sgang.⁸⁹ Chu-ri-ram⁹⁰ 'increasing bone' of the Buddha... Miraculous relics of Dga'-rab-rdo-rje.⁹¹ The forearm of Rgyal-ba-mchog-dbyangs⁹² and bones of nine other Nyingma historical figures of the eighth century (listed).

3) Consecrated substances (*dam-rdzas*) and blessing bestowing objects of worship (*rten byin-brlabs-can*, = *byin-rten*):

A jewel blessed by Buddha Kāśyapa,⁹³ brought by Nāgārjuna from the *nāga* land, concealed by Padmasambhava at Turquoise Lake in Tsari,⁹⁴ and rediscovered by Ye-shes-rdo-rje.⁹⁵ Images of the Buddhas of the five types (*rigs*, 'families'). A reddish bronze Buddha image. A fine, large image of Maitreya made of golden bronze... A testicle (*a-ri*) rediscovered by 'Ja'-tshon-snying-po⁹⁶ at Kong-phrang-brag. The red and white Bodhicitta (in this context, "reproductive substances") of Padmasambhava and his consort rediscovered at Lha-ri Snang-mtha'. Hair of Padmasambhava. Hair of Tibetan emperors. A testicle rediscovered at Bsam-yas Mchims-phu. A testicle rediscovered from behind the Jowo (Jo-bo) image at Lhasa.⁹⁷ Clothing, hair, testicle[s], etc., of Padmasambhava rediscovered by Sangs-rgyas-gling-pa⁹⁸ along with an assortment of consecrated articles and manuscript pages rediscovered by the various Rediscoverers (Terton, *gter-ston*, discussed above). Relics and consecrated articles from Kargyudpa saints. Elixir Pellets (*bdud-rtsi ril-bu*).⁹⁹ A tooth of 'Brug-smyon Kun-legs.¹⁰⁰ More hair relics. A skull of Khyung-po Ras-chen with a naturally formed letter 'A' on it along with his forearm with a natural image of Amitâyus. Special earths and stones from India, Tibet and China. Brahmin flesh rediscovered by O-rgyan-gling-pa (b. 1323) and the same rediscovered by Rdor-'bum-chos-grags and Sangs-rgyas-bla-ma.¹⁰¹ Flesh of Ratna-gling-pa.¹⁰² Loincloths (*ang-rag*) of Gtsang-smyon and of Dbus-smyon.¹⁰³ The sitting cushion and loincloth of Tilopa.¹⁰⁴ The bones and shroud of Nyang Ta-thâ-ga-ta.¹⁰⁵ Milarepa's loincloth... Long Life Pellets of the Karmapa school which include the 'increasing bone' of Yang-ston-pa. A garuḍa bird¹⁰⁶ claw discovered at Mdzo-nag. Earth and stone from various parts of Tibet... Precious stones. Medicinal herbs. Food. Grains. Cloth.

There follow several long quotes prophecying the opening of the Hidden Country (Sbas Yul) of Sikkim, the author of this piece

being the person credited with its ‘opening’.¹⁰⁷ Then there are more ‘advertisements’, saying that three years of meditation can be accomplished in three days at this chorten; finally, more prophecies and praises of Sikkim.

*Chorten Guide by Zhu-chen Tshul-khrims-rin-chen (1697-1774)*¹⁰⁸

Zhu-chen was a monk of the Sakyapa (Sa-skyapa) school, famous as a poet, but mainly remembered for his role as main editor (*zhu-chen*) of the collection of Indic treatises in Tibetan translation—the Tanjur—as it was printed in Derge (Sde-dge). Among his works is a two volume catalogue of the Derge Tanjur. Zhu-chen’s description, beginning as is usual with scriptural citations demonstrating the merits to be gained by building a chorten, tells us how this particular chorten was constructed in Derge through the efforts of the Lama Lhun-grub-ting-’dzin in memory of the abbot ’Jam-dbyangs-bsod-nams.¹⁰⁹ Zhu-chen’s list begins with the insertion of *dhâraṇī* (which he calls by one of their common names, ‘Dharmabody relics’) into various parts of the interior. Then the listing of other relics (the *gdung ring-bsrel*)¹¹⁰ begins:

Two genuine ‘increasing bone’ of the Tathâgata the size of mustard seeds. Hair of Sa-skyapa Paṇḍi-ta.¹¹¹ Clothing of Chos-rje Bla-ma Dam-pa.¹¹² *Tsha-tsha*¹¹³ in the shape of White Târâ containing relics of Dkon-mchog-dpal-ldan-pa. Clothing of Dpal-ldan-don-grub. Powdered bone of Nam-mkha’-rin-chen. *Tsha-tsha* in the shape of Hevajra containing relics of Mkhan-chen Bzang-po-rgyal-mtshan. Clothing of Sangs-rgyas-phun-tshogs.¹¹⁴ The entire head of hair of Bsod-nams-bzang-po. Clothing and powdered bone of Bkra-shis-lhun-grub. A single tooth, powdered bone, clothing of the All Knowing Tshul-khrims-lhun-grub-pa. Bone ash of Mkhan-chen Sangs-rgyas-dpal-bzang-pa. Hair of Shug-ra-ba Kun-dga’-dpal’byor. Bones of the Vajraholder Bkra-shis-bzang-po. The Great Siddha Thang-stong-rgyal-po’s¹¹⁵ Long Life Pellets. Seven Rebirth (as Brahmin) Pellets of Dga’-ldan-pa.¹¹⁶ Pellets consecrated by the Panchen Lama. Elixir Pellets made by the Lamas of Ngor.¹¹⁷

There follows a long list of images of saints and Buddhas which were inserted, in other words, *tsha-tsha* made of clay which contained the following relics:

Tooth of the Bodhisattva Chos-’phags.¹¹⁸ Bones of Sa-chen.¹¹⁹ Shroud (? *sku-chings*) of Bsod-nams-rtse-mo.¹²⁰ Coat of Rje-btsun-grags-pa. Hair of Sa-skyapa Paṇḍi-ta. Dance costume of the previous [Sakyapa] masters. Sleeve cloth and coat of Sa-lo.¹²¹ A cover used when transporting a leather mask (?)

bse 'bag) from India. Skull of Bdag-chen Ngag-dbang-po. Hair of 'Jam-dbyangs-kun-dga'-bsod-nams.¹²² Sleeve cloth and bones of Glo-bo Mkhan-chen...¹²³ Bones of a long list of other Sakyapa saints. Earth and water from holy places in India, Nepal and Tibet including Bodhgaya, the Nairañjanā River and so forth.

These relics, with yellow cloth and fragrances, filled the entire chorten up to the top of the 'vessel' (*bum-pa*) part. Various types of jewels and precious stones were enclosed. Sandalwood. Myrobalan (*a-ru-ra*) fruits. Herbs. Incense. Sugar. Molasses. Honey. Grains. Chinese tea. Mud from Lake Manasarovar. Pebbles from glacier mountains. Various fruits. The work ends with a brief account of the consecration carried out by the author himself, and the dedication of merit.

*Gung-thang-pa's (1762-1823) Guides to the Contents of Several Chortens including one Erected in Memory of Blo-bzang-bkra-shis*¹²⁴

This Guide, unlike the others summarized here, is a simple list of contents without further description of the chorten or surrounding area. It is included within a larger work devoted to such 'content lists' of both chortens and images.¹²⁵ The life of Gung-thang-pa, a renowned Gelugpa cleric, abbot of Tashikhyil Monastery¹²⁶ in Amdo, Northeast Tibet, has already been described,¹²⁷ so we will go directly to the Guide itself:

Genuine 'increasing bone' of the Buddha. Clothing and hair of Atiśa.¹²⁸ Clothing of Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta¹²⁹ and of Chos-rje Don-grub Rin-po-che.¹³⁰ Hair, clothing and shroud of Bdag-nyid-chen-po [one of the Sakya hierarchs, unspecified]. Clothing of Lho-brag Grub-chen.¹³¹ Clothing of the translator from Rwa.¹³² Hair and clothing of Thang-stong-rgyal-po.¹³³ Clothing of Rgyal-tshab-rje.¹³⁴ Hair and clothing of Mkhas-grub-rje.¹³⁵ Clothing of 'Dul-'dzin-pa.¹³⁶ Hair and clothing of Ba-so Chos-rgyan.¹³⁷ Hair of the Second Dalai Lama Dge-'dun-rgya-mtsho (1475-1542). Clothing of the Third Dalai Lama Bsod-nams-rgya-mtsho (1543-1588). Hair of the Fourth Dalai Lama Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho (1589-1616). Hair, a book, and clothing of the First Panchen Lama Blo-bzang-chos-rgyan.¹³⁸ Hair and fingernails of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682). Clothing of the Second Panchen Lama Blo-bzang-ye-shes (1663-1737). Hair and clothing of the Seventh Dalai Lama Bskal-bzang-rgya-mtsho (1708-1758). Clothing of Khri-chen Rgyal-mtshan-seng-ge,¹³⁹ Dung-dkar 'Brug-grags,¹⁴⁰ the Bya-khyung abbot¹⁴¹ and others. Hair of Lcang-skya Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje,¹⁴² the Kanjurwa Incarnate,¹⁴³ Grub-dbang Stobs-ldan Rin-po-che,¹⁴⁴ the All Knowing 'Jigs-med-dbang-po,¹⁴⁵ Khri-chen Ngag-dbang-bkra-shis,¹⁴⁶ the Chas-pa Incarnation,¹⁴⁷ Smin-gling

Chos-kyi-rgyal-po¹⁴⁸ and the Sgom-chen Rin-po-che¹⁴⁹ himself. Bones of Rje Chos-skyong-rgya-mtsho and Khri Nam-mkha'-bzang.¹⁵⁰ Embalming salts (*pur tshwa*) of the Master of Spiritual Accomplishment¹⁵¹ himself. Four thousand images of the Rje Bla-ma,¹⁵² four thousand images of the Medicine Buddha (Sman-bla), one thousand each of Amitâyus and Târâ, a little more than a thousand other images, among them the eight Sugatas, Amitâbha, Mañjuśrî, Avalokiteśvara, Bhairava and Vijâya. Many pellets containing various objects of worship (*rtên*) from India and Tibet. Wood, stone, earth and water from holy places of India, China, Western Tibet (Mnga'-ris), Nepal, Central Tibet (Dbus-gtsang) and Eastern Tibet (Mdo-smad). In addition, fragrant herbs, types of incense, powder of precious substances, and so on. These completely filled the interior without leaving any remaining space. As the most important of the 'four types of relics',¹⁵³ the Dharmabody relics, or *dhâraṇî*, were inscribed according to custom and inserted into the upper, lower and middle parts of the chorten.

Before leaving Gung-thang-pa, we would like to mention some of the more interesting items from the other chorten content lists within the same larger work. One content list includes books: the 'root tantras' of *Cakrasamvara* and *Guhyasamâja*; the *Bodhisattvacâryâvatâra*, the *Lam-rim Chen-mo* of Tsongkhapa, etc.¹⁵⁴ There are fingernails and blood ('body vermillion', *sku-mtshal*) relics. There are Tsongkhapa's urine (*gsang-chab*) pellets,¹⁵⁵ nasal blood (*shangs khrag*) of the Fifth Dalai Lama, rosaries, *tsha-tsha* made by the hands of Smṛti¹⁵⁶ and the Panchen Lama.

Then there is one curious statement about a genuine starter (*phab-rgyun*, as in 'yeast starter' for making beer or yoghurt) for many ancient supports of worship (*rtên*)¹⁵⁷ which contained hair, tooth, bone and clothing relics of an impressive array of saints; Nyingma, Kargyudpa, Gelugpa and Sakyapa saints, about forty-four all told, if we count the Seven Rebirths (as Brahmins) Flesh. As the yeast starter analogy makes clear, we are dealing with a substance consecrated by minute, and probably extremely minute traces of relics added to the 'brew' through centuries of consecration rites, similar to the way Tibetan beer is made with the residues from earlier batches, thus preserving and transmitting the mold spores necessary for fermentation.¹⁵⁸

In a later list, we find hand and foot imprints (*rjes*), copies of texts for chanting which belonged to many holy persons, double headed *ḍâmaru* drums, vajras, bells,¹⁵⁹ and a natural syllable *Om* made of bone.¹⁶⁰ In yet other lists are handkerchiefs (*shangs-phyis*), powder of various persons' bones and clothing mixed together, pellets made with bones of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

*Kong-sprul's (1813-1899) Guide to the Chorten Built to Enshrine the Remains of his Bonpo Teacher G. yung-drung-phun-tshogs*¹⁶¹

So far, we have examined one chorten Guide by a Nyingma Ter-ton, one by a Sakyapa literary figure, and another by a Gelugpa hierarch. Now we turn to the fourth and last Guide by the most famous of several great leaders of what has been called the Universalist or Nonsectarian (Ris-med) movement. Kong-sprul started life as a Bonpo (about which, more shortly), then entered a Nyingma monastery and, finally, became a Kargyudpa monk. These moves from monasteries of one sect to those of another were simply that for him. He had a strong appetite for knowledge that could not be satisfied by a single school. Indeed, it could not be confined to religious studies; his medical works, for example, are contemporary classics in the field. By entering the Nyingma monastery, he did not, even if it may have been expected of him, *renounce* his Bonpo past. He devoted himself to Bon studies throughout his life and, the present text being one proof, continued to hold his Bonpo teachers in the highest esteem. Kong-sprul did not necessarily crusade against intolerance; he was just not the sort of person who could understand why intolerance should exist, or why others should find sectarian affiliations so overwhelmingly important.¹⁶²

The Bon school is not easy to characterize simply (and simple characterizations are dangerous, generally). It claims direct descent from a (not necessarily *the*) pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet which had its founding moment when Gshen-rab-mi-bo (16,016-7,816 B.C.)¹⁶³ visited Tibet in pursuit of stolen horses. Kong-sprul's Guide begins with a sketch of Bon doctrine and history which, despite its interest, cannot be disentagled here. Bon was and is the subject of much polemic in Tibetan life and literature, but for our purposes it is enough to say that, as it has existed in the last millenium, it in any case supplies its adherents basically the same sorts of answers to the same religious needs as do the other sects.

The teacher whose relics were to be enshrined in the chorten, G. yung-drung-phun-tshogs, took monastic vows at Sman-ri Monastery, the principal educational center for Bon studies in Gtsang province of central Tibet, and spent much of his life engaged in religious retreats. That his contemplative visualizations included Old (Nyingma) and New Tantras as well as Bonpo

divinities makes it a little more understandable that Kong-sprul, as his student, would follow a career of intersectorian tolerance. Kong-sprul tells further details of his teacher's life; but let us turn now to the contents of the chorten built in his honor. The Bon relics (*ring-bsrel*) are divided in five classes:

- 1) Bon Relics: The collected *dhâraṇī* of Bon written in gold and silver on azure colored paper. Many other canonical Bonpo *dhâraṇī* and sūtras (listed by title). One volume, it should be noted, was printed on Chinese paper using ink made of vermillion mixed with jewel (powder), herbs and relics (of the most general category of 'blessing supports', *byin-rten*).
- 2) Mustard seed like relics: In the uppermost tip of the chorten, a relic (*sha-rī-ram*) larger than a Tibetan pea which came from the bone of Khyung-po Rang-grol Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan.¹⁶⁴ A pea sized relic which came from the bone of Sku-mdun Bsod-nams-blo-gros.¹⁶⁵
- 3) Bon image relics: A thousand images each of some eleven Bonpo deities and saints made from clay mixed with the ashes of Kong-sprul's teacher, G. yung-drung-phun-tshogs. Other images.
- 4) Physical remains relics (*sku-gdung-gi ring-bsrel*): In the upper, east part of the inside of the 'vessel' (*bum-pa*), a tooth of Bru Nam-mkha'-g.yung-drung¹⁶⁶ marked by two white mustard seed like relics (*sha-rī-ram*). A dark maroon colored letter 'M' which appeared on the heart of Stag-la of Khyung-po. A skull relic of Do-shang Bla-ma marked by a golden color. Khyung-za Chos-sgron's¹⁶⁷ skull with a naturally formed letter 'A'. Remains of many learned and spiritually accomplished persons of all sects (not listed).
- 5) Clothing (etc.) relics: Hair, hats, clothing, rosaries, handprints, etc., of some thirty-five different Bonpos (names listed), for the most part belonging to the thirteenth century or later.

As a final, distinct category, Kong-sprul lists the consecrated articles from the *Chos* traditions, by which is meant all the Tibetan Buddhist sects besides Bon:

Consecrated articles of the *Chos* traditions: An Indian book which belonged to the great translator Vairocana. Flesh of Seven Times Reborn as Brahmin Pellets. Consecrated articles of the Karmapas [including] Great Black Pellets (Ril Nag Chen-mo). Elixir Pellets (Bdud-rtsi Ril-bu) of the Ngor subsect of the Sakyapa school. Other types of blessed, consecrated articles which were contained in the 'worship box' (*rtan sgam*) of the Derge ruling family (Saskyong Sde-dge) including Nyingmapa, Karmapa, Drukpa ('Brug-pa), Sakyapa and Gelugpa articles.

Then there is a description of the materials used to build the chorten and the method used in its construction, in this case following the instructions from a work by Kun-grol-grags-pa.¹⁶⁸ Then there is a list of holy places of India, Tibet and Nepal, whence came

earth, stone, wood, grass, flowers, etc., which were enclosed. Kong-sprul ends with quotations from Bon scriptures to demonstrate the benefits of circumambulating, prostrating, and lighting lamps at a chorten.

More Evidence: Consecration and Dhâraṇī Insertion Texts

So far, we have looked at chorten Guides in some way connected with all five of the major sects of Tibetan Buddhism; but let us now have a look at a different type of literature, texts which describe the actual process of consecration. One Gelugpa chorten consecration has already been studied elsewhere. The author is the first Lcang-skye incarnation, Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-chos-ldan (1642-1714).¹⁶⁹ He supplies the following general classification of relics (*ring-bsrel*) aside from the *dhâraṇī*, which are also included in his discussion:

- 1) Mustard seeds like relics: 'Increasing bone' of the Tathâgata and so forth.
- 2) Remains (*sku-gdung*) relics: Remains of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
- 3) Clothing (*sku-bal*) relics: Hair, nails, clothing and so forth, of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.¹⁷⁰

My second example of a chorten consecration text (or, more technically speaking, a '*dhâraṇī* insertion' text) is that of 'Bri-gung Rig-'dzin Chos-kyi-grags-pa (b. 1595). The title of this work, written in 1636 A.D., translates—*Ocean of the Two Accumulations [of Merit and Total Knowledge]: Ritual Methods for Inserting the Five [Types of] Relics (ring-bsrel)*.¹⁷¹ It deals with consecration rites for images as well as chortens. Beginning with comments on the correct mensuration of images and chortens, it then quotes at length from the *Kûṭâgâra Sûtra*¹⁷² on the merits of building chortens. Then we are happily supplied with a most thorough classification of relics:

- 1) Dharmabody relics: These might be understood to be "Dharma incorporating"¹⁷³ relics. These relics, which indicate the nature of the Dharmabody, include the eight chortens and *tsha-tshas* which in turn contain *dhâraṇī*, for instance those of Śâkyamuni, Uṣṇîṣavijâya, Vimaloṣṇîṣa, and so on.

- 2) Mustard seed like relics: These come from the bones of special people such as the three types of saints.¹⁷⁴ Those which are transparent in color and as big as a pea or larger are called *gdung*. Those smaller than this are called *ring-bsrel*. In the *Sku-gdung 'Bar-ba* and other tantras of the Nyingma Secret Mantra, there is a division into five: *sha-ri-ram*, *ba-ri-ram*, *chu-ri-ram*, *nya-ri-ram*, and *panytsa-ram*.¹⁷⁵ But these are only divisions according to color. They, as

well as all the other *gdung* and *ring-bsrel*, are included within the category of mustard seed like relics.

3) Dharma relics: Mantras from Vajrayâna literature and *dhâranî* from Sûtrayâna literature. All the pronouncements of the Buddhas as well as reliable commentaries on the same are included in this category.

4) Remains (*sku-gdung*) relics: The remains of the Root Guru or other superior personages, of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Hearers and Solitary Realizers. Body (images), Speech (scriptures) and Mind (chortens) receptacles which include the preceding. This category generally includes such things as their flesh, blood and bones.

5) Clothing (*sku-bal*) relics: Hair of those same sorts of personages. Their finger or toe nails, clothing, etc. In general, anything blessed by its connection with their bodies.

This work has many interesting details on the treatment of relics (example: one should not insert entire articles of clothing, but rather fragments or ashes) and on the consecration rituals themselves, which cannot be treated here due to their great complexity and variation.¹⁷⁶

My final examples are from another work by Kong-sprul.¹⁷⁷ He supplies the following classification:

- 1) Dharmabody relics: *dhâranî* and mantras.
- 2) Remains relics: remains of supreme personages.
- 3) Clothing relics: pieces of hair, fingernails and so forth.
- 4) Mustard seed like relics: Those things known as 'increasing bone' and *sha-rî-ram*, particularly those from the Buddha.

Then he cites an alternative classification from a text that had been "recently" translated from Chinese into Tibetan in the eighteenth century,¹⁷⁸ the *Bodhigarbhâlamkâra*:

- 1) Dharmabody relics: *sâtstsha* (= *tsha-tsha*) and chortens.
- 2) Tathâgata relics: same as 2 in preceding list.
- 3) Clothing relics: same as 3 in preceding list.
- 4) Dharma relics: *dhâranî*, mantras and volumes of scripture.
- 5) Mere mustard seed relics (*yungs-'bru tsam-gyi ring-bsrel*): same as 4 in preceding list.

Kong-sprul does not find these designations and definitions in any essential conflict, although the very different definitions for Dharmabody relics are worth noting.

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Please note that part of this material, viewed in its historical dimension, is subject of a short paper entitled 'Crystals and Images from Bodies, Hearts and Tongues from Fire: Points of Relic Controversy from Tibetan History', forthcoming in the proceedings of the Fifth International Association for Tibetan Studies Conference held at Narita, Japan, on August 1989.

¹ Jesus, of course, is believed to have ascended into heaven with His body, thus limiting (but not entirely) the availability of His bodily remains. I have not learned about the preservation of any of Muhammed's *bodily* relics, although the hairs of his beard seem to be widely spread. I heard that a few hairs from Muhammed's beard were kept in a reliquary box at the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. His footprints are also said to be found there. Jesus's footprints are believed to be on the Mount of Olives just across the valley from the Dome of the Rock. For more on Christian relics and on relics generally, see Bentley, *Restless Bones*. This is the most readable book I have found on the subject, although there are many. For an interesting comparison between Buddhist and Christian relics, see Benard, 'Living Among the Dead.'

² Geertz, *Islam Observed*, p. 44. This is related to Hebrew *brachah*, with the same meaning.

³ The Greek *khari pneumatike*, or *dynamis*; MacCulloch, 'Relics', p. 654.

⁴ For example, Ekval, *Religious Observances*, p. 156. One more imaginative ethnographer has given the translation 'splendourous ripples' (Stablein, 'Medical-Cultural System', p. 195).

⁵ Inagaki, 'Kūkai's *Sokushin-Jōbutsu-Gi*', p. 194.

⁶ Basic literal meaning of the Sanskrit word is 'being near, being at hand, resting upon, indwelling', etc.

⁷ This is perhaps the most general term, being used to cover not only sacred icons, but consecrated articles (about which, more below) and relics, as all are 'receptacles of blessings'.

⁸ The two optional categories, more frequently encountered in Nyingmapa and Bon sources, are 'quality' (*yon-tan*) and 'action' (*phrin-las*).

⁹ It should be noted that all three 'receptacles' may contain relics of some sort, the 'Speech receptacles', or holy books, being no exception. Small quantities of relics could be, and were (examples below), mixed with ink. Shakabpa (*Bod-kyi Srid-don*, vol. I, p. 56) notes that cremation ash could be mixed with the ink used in copying scriptures.

¹⁰ Of course, many reliquaries and images have been opened by museum curators, art collectors and the like, and their contents 'scientifically' investigated. This I leave to the scientists, not having any inclination for such morbid business. I put this activity in one class with icon destruction, grave robbing and other such acts which reflect a fundamental attitude of disrespect toward both the living and

the dead. It is, when done with the usual motivations, an insensitive act of desecration. One exceptionally well informed and thorough example of this approach should be mentioned; Robert A. Hatt, 'A Thirteenth Century Tibetan Reliquary'.

¹¹ I have now dealt in some detail with this issue in Martin, 'Crystals and Images.'

¹² There is also a kind of dust, called *manna*, that was sometimes miraculously emitted from saints' tombs (see Duncan-Flowers, 'Pilgrim's Ampulla', p. 128 ff.) and the miraculous emissions of oil, called 'myrrh', noted in Bakirtzis, 'Byzantine Ampullae', p. 141 ff.

¹³ See McCulloh, 'From Antiquity to the Middle Ages.'

¹⁴ Since writing these words, an extremely illuminating book on the nature of Tertons and their rediscoveries has appeared—Thondup Rinpoche, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*. One of the most remarkable things about this book, besides the clarity with which it shows the identity of terma texts with relics, is the number of full color pictures of relic-images (called *sku-tshab*, 'representatives') which were rediscovered together with texts (*ibid.*, p. 151).

¹⁵ More often than not, these mass migrations to Hidden Countries were aimed at southern 'uncivilized' (according to Tibetan perceptions) areas. For one such attempt at Tibetan colonization in the first years of the twentieth century which failed, see Lamb, *McMahon*, vol. 2, p. 320. For the Tibetan side of the same story, see Bernbaum, *The Way to Shambhala*, pp. 69-70. See also Brauen-Dolma, 'Millenarianism' and works cited there.

¹⁶ See Lha-btsun's Guide, where rediscovered manuscripts as well as consecrated articles and relics were enclosed during the consecration. Kong-sprul's Guide includes canonical Bonpo sūtras as well as "an Indian book which belonged to the great translator Vairocana." Vairocana lived in the late eighth to early ninth centuries. An "Indian book of the great translator Vairocana" is mentioned among objects placed in the chorten for enshrining the remains of the Third Pan-chen Lama. See Paṇ-chen III, *Collected Works*, vol. 13, p. 573.3.

¹⁷ An informal survey of the part of Dargyay's *Rise of Esoteric Buddhism* where she translates summary biographies of the Tertons shows, apart from sealed boxes buried under earth or stone, the following rediscovery sites: temples (15), caves (8), images (7), chortens (4), lakes (2), and pillars (1).

¹⁸ Dge-ri. An unidentified place name. See Roerich, *Blue Annals*, p. 1053, where the building of a chorten in this place is mentioned.

¹⁹ Probably an eccentric representation of Prabhahasti (= Pra-bha-ha-ti), one of the Eight Great Sages (Rig-'dzin) who also include Padmasambhava in their number. Prabhahasti is especially connected with the revelation of the Nyingma *Vajrakīla* (*Phur-pa*) Tantra; Thondup, *Tantric Tradition*, pp. 16, 18, *et passim*. We must note that the "red and white reproductive substances," or "red and white Bodhicitta" (Byang-sems dkar dmar) are not just reproductive substances *per se*. They derive from the parents and are believed to continue (somehow) in the body. When saintly lamas die, they are sometimes said to emit these substances from their right and left nostrils. See Barlocher, *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 448 ff.

²⁰ Ratna-gling-pa, *Collected Rediscovered Teachings*, vol. 1, p. 159. This biography was compiled by Nor-bu-yongs-grags (seventeenth century) who preserved earlier biographical and autobiographical material intact.

²¹ See now Aris, *Hidden Treasures*. The nature of the rediscoveries themselves is not so well covered in this treatment of the life of Padma-gling-pa. There is an

interesting references to “a relic... spontaneously produced from one of his teeth.” (p. 66).

²² *Rnying-ma Rgyud-'bum* (1982, vol. 11, pp. 788-815; 1973, vol. 9, pp. 600-624).

²³ This naturally makes it difficult to leave bodily relics. Allione, *Women of Wisdom*, pp. 192-3 (note 42), gives a description which closely reflects some Tibetan beliefs on these ‘disappearing lamas’. It is interesting to note that they are said to leave their hair and nails behind. We have seen how hair and nails belong to the ‘clothing’ (*sku-bal*) relic category, as things closely connected with, but not a part of, the body.

²⁴ These same signs are discussed by Thondup, *Tantric Tradition*, pp. 194-5, note 163.

²⁵ Dargyay, *Rise of Esoteric*, p. 214 (note 60), calls these images *rtēn*. In my experience (admittedly limited), they are always called simply *sku* (‘body, image’) with the specific meaning known only by context. To quote Dargyay in full, “The Tibetan language has different terms for the various kinds of relics. There are *rtēn* and *ring-srel*—relics. *rtēn* signifies relics in the shape of Stupas or gods that originated from parts of the corpse during the cremation. *ring-bsrel* denotes some whitish pill-like stuff that also came from the cremation residues.”

²⁶ These types of relics will be discussed later on. It is interesting to compare a text representing the words of Zhang G.yu-brag-pa (1123-1193) to his disciples in a Wood Mouse year (1144?—This seems too early, and there is probably a mistake in the date). This text identifies the five relics (*gdung*) of the Tathāgata as: 1) *sha-ri-ram* which depends on the flesh; 2) *chu-ri-ram*, which depends on the blood; 3) *nya-ri-ram*, which depends on the marrow; 4) *ba-ri-ram*, which depends on the bones and cartilage; 5) *ka-ri-ram*, which depends on the brain and sinews. This passage occurs in Zhang, *Bka'-rgya-ma*, vol. 2, pp. 2.6-3.1. Further (Nyingmapa) sources on these types of relics are cited in Sde-srid, *'Dzam-gling-rgyan-gcig*, pp. 563-66.

²⁷ Hyer and Jagchid, *Mongolian Living Buddha*, p. 12. Sanskrit spellings have been corrected in the citation. ‘Sharil’ seems to have been borrowed into Tibetan as *sha-ril*, to mean relics with images in relief (see *Bod Rgya Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo*, p. 2828).

²⁸ In the Sku-tshab-gter-lnga temple in the Thāk district of Nepal, D. Snellgrove noticed, “a section of the skull of [a] ... lama with the Tibetan letter A embossed as it were on the bone, for he had meditated so long on this basic vowel-sound, which lies at the root of all existence, that it had produced its written symbol miraculously inside his skull.” Snellgrove, *Himalayan Pilgrimage*, p. 187.

²⁹ Allione, *Women of Wisdom*, pp. 203-4 (note 140; see also p. xxiv, note 1). Note as well M. Slusser’s (*Nepal Mandala*, vol. I, p. 151, no. 69) statement: “According to a Buddhist monk I once talked with at Svayambhū, they [stūpas] also contain *rincils*, a divine substance which in the form of firm, white variously sized beads mysteriously spews out of stupas on occasions. They are exceedingly precious and, wrapped in brocade and silk, as I have shown, are conserved in phials as reliquaries.”

³⁰ See Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, pp. 153-182, the chapter entitled ‘War with the Gurkhas and Dogras.’

³¹ It is on this day that Tibetans celebrate the birth, Enlightenment and final Nirvāṇa of Śākyamuni Buddha, hence ‘three holidays in one’ (*dus-chen gsum 'dzom*).

³² Bodhanath is the other great chorten of the Nepalese valley. Swayambhunath is to the west of Kathmandu, while Bodhanath lies to the east.

³³ *nya-mig-ma*. For another reference to 'fish eyes' in a relic context, see Dpa'-bo, *Mkhas-pa'i Dga'-ston*, vol. 2, p. 641.

³⁴ Rdo-ring Bka'-blon, *Rdo-ring Paṇḍi-ta'i Rnam-thar*, vol. 2, pp. 850-851. I must thank Tashi Tshering of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (Dharamsala) for pointing out this passage to me.

³⁵ From the biography of Rong-ston as contained in Śākya-mchog-ldan, *Complete Works*, vol. 16, pp. 299-378, at p. 365.

³⁶ Howorth, *History of the Mongols*, pt. 3, p. 321. Von Hammer's unique theory about the nature of *ring-bsrel* might be based on a misapprehension of the idea (attested in the passage from the *Bka'-gdams Glegs-bam* cited elsewhere) that they appear as signs of highly developed Bodhicitta ('awakened heart' being one possible translation).

³⁷ A reliably early account of *ring-bsrel* appearing after a cremation is found in the biography of Sgam-po-pa (1079-1153) written by his disciple 'Ba'-rom-pa (1127-1203?)—see O-rgyan-pa, *Dkar-brgyud*, pp. 267, 269.

³⁸ Gyalzur, 'Spells on the Life-Wood', p. 180.

³⁹ Sangay, *Bod Mi'i 'Das Mehod*, p. 1, where *ring-bsrel* are crushed and mixed with 'yak' (the female 'bri, naturally) or cow butter and placed in the mouth of the dying person. For an English summary of the same work by Sangay, see *Tibetan Medicine*, series no. 7 (1984), pp. 30-40, under the title 'Tibetan Ritual for the Dead'. Shakabpa (*Bod-kyi Srid-don*, vol. 1, p. 56) also attests to this practice, as does Rdo-ring Bka'-blon, *Rdo-ring Paṇḍi-ta'i Rnam-thar* (vol. 2, p. 841), a work dating to the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century.

⁴⁰ In Tibetan, the word *mi-chos* has various uses, one of them in the field of law, but it is also used to mean 'religion of the people'. In the latter case, the term is in opposition to *lha-chos*, 'religion of the gods', which means Buddhist methods for transcending the mundane realm. Comparing the meanings of *mi-chos* and our term 'popular religion' only seems to complicate matters in this context, since they share only a small part of their semantic fields. The greater part of Tibetans' popular religious practices are very clearly Buddhist, having their justifications and inspirations in Buddhist scriptures, while the goals of these practices (in any case the *final* goals) are Buddhist ones.

⁴¹ The Nyingma teacher Rong-zom-pa Chos-kyi-bzang-po (eleventh century) was also a scholastic, although his works do not focus so directly on problems of method. Phywa-pa Chos-kyi-seng-ge (1109-1169) might deserve the title of 'founding father' of Tibetan scholastic method even more than Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta, but his works are no longer available (except in citations) and they have certainly not had the enduring influence on Tibetan education as have those of Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta. For valuable material on Phywa-pa Chos-kyi-seng-ge, his influence on Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta and many others during this period, see Kuijp, 'Phya-pa Chos-kyi Seng-ge's Impact'.

⁴² See especially the passage in Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta, *Sdom-pa Gsum-gyi Rab-tu Dbye-ba'i Bstan-bcos*, p. 69b (line 1, ff.), where he criticizes people for following the letter rather than the intentions of these sorts of statements (which are, after all, commonly found in many sūtras). In effect, he criticizes them for not being sufficiently educated or intelligent to recognize commonplace rhetorical devices. *Dkar-po gcig-thub* means 'white one-is-enough'. It is an epithet applied to more than one medicinal substance meaning that a single ingredient is deemed sufficient for

relieving the disease—most medicinal treatments prescribed by Tibetan doctors are compounds, with those of 25 or more ingredients not at all unusual. Recent discussions of *dkar-po gcig-thub* have focussed too narrowly on the philosophical aspects, entirely missing Sa-skyā Paṇḍi-ta's uses of the term in relation to popular religious practices (see especially Broido, 'Sa-skyā Paṇḍita', Jackson, 'Sa-skyā Paṇḍita', and references supplied there).

⁴³ To hearts and tongues we should add eyes. Sometimes when saints are cremated, the hearts, tongue or eyes (or all three) remain unburned. This is a sign that the mind, speech and body (respectively) of the saint have achieved close approximation to the Mind, Speech and Body of Buddhahood. In the 1484 A.D. history of the Bka'-gdams-pa sect by Bsod-nams-lha'i-dbang-po it is said that when one of the greatest Bka'-gdams-pa teachers of the eleventh century, Po-to-ba (1027-1105), was cremated, "heart, tongue and many *ring-bsrel* of the five different colors emerged." (See *Two Histories of the Bka'-gdams-pa Tradition*, p. 314.8.)

⁴⁴ The 'images (*sku-gzugs*) and so forth' referred to in this context are the divine images and syllables which appear in relief on the bones of deceased saints. On this point, the commentaries are in agreement. The fifteenth century commentary by Spos-khang-pa (vol. 3, p. 337) quotes reports (while reserving judgement on their truth value) to the effect that these images are caused by Generation Stage contemplations and that *ring-bsrel* are produced by cultivation of Bodhicitta (Enlightened Thought); but see Ramble, 'Status', p. 348, n. 24, for another explanation. The probable source of Spos-khang-pa is the *Bka'-gdams Glegs-bam* (see below).

⁴⁵ As Mkhan-chen Sangs-rgyas-bstan-'dzin (writing in 1954) interprets in his commentary (p. 260, line 4), these genuine *ring-bsrel* should be a subject for confidence since they become worship supports for the accumulation of merit by embodied beings through touching, thinking or hearing about, and perceiving them. The commentary of Spos-khang-pa (vol. 3, p. 334) has a different reading for this passage which makes both the strength of the saintly qualities of the deceased as well as the strength of merit of embodied ones to be causes for the occurrence of *ring-bsrel*.

⁴⁶ According to the same commentary by the Mkhan-chen (p. 260, line 5), the genuine *ring-bsrel* is like a jewel which is known to have come from its place of origin in the ocean or a mine and hence of unquestionable authenticity.

⁴⁷ The Mkhan-chen (p. 261, line 2) suggests that they might be manufactured out of various substances (including mother-of-pearl and ivory) and through magical illusions.

⁴⁸ It is significant that Sa-skyā Paṇḍi-ta did not include *ring-bsrel* among the items not mentioned in Buddhist scriptures. Go-rams-pa Bsod-nams-seng-ge (1429-1489), in his commentary as contained in the *Sa-skyā Bka'-'bum* (vol. 14, p. 193d, line 4) cites the *Bskal-bzang* (*Bhadrakalpā Sūtra* (Toh. no. 94) and the *Meeting of Father and Son Sūtra* (Toh. no. 60) of the *Dkon-brtsegs* section as scriptural sources for *ring-bsrel*. That the 'images' are mentioned in the *Sku-gdung 'Bar-ba*, would not impress Sa-skyā Paṇḍi-ta; he would not have accepted this tantra as a genuine scripture, along with most of the other Nyingma tantras and rediscoveries (*gter-ma*).

⁴⁹ Spos-khang-pa (vol. 3, p. 338, line 4) specifies that these *ring-bsrel* produced by living persons come from their teeth, hair or armpits.

⁵⁰ According to Mkhan-chen Sangs-rgyas-bstan-'dzin (p. 262, line 3), these occurrences were said to be bad signs in the *Stag Sna Avadāna* (i.e., *Stag Rna*; Toh. no. 358). The fifteenth century commentary by Ngag-dbang-chos-grags (p. 431, line 1) was his most likely source for this statement.

⁵¹ Mkhan-chen Sangs-rgyas-bstan-'dzin p. 262.6) cites a passage from the *Mig Bcu-gnyis-pa Sūtra* (Toh. no. 359) which says that moving or crying images are signs of calamity. Ngag-dbang-chos-grags (p. 431, line 2) adds the birth of strange animals to the list of prodigies and quotes a passage from the *Mig Bcu-gnyis-pa* (the name means 'Twelve Eyes'). I have now discussed these sūtra passages in Martin, 'Crystals and Images'.

⁵² The Tibetan text for the translated passage begins on page 318a, line 3, of the *Sdom-pa Gsum-gyi Rab-tu Dbye-ba* as found in the collected works of Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta in the *Sa-skya Bka'-'bum* (vol. 5, pp. 297-320). It may also be found in Sa-skya Paṇḍita, *Sdom-pa Gsum-gyi Rab-tu Dbye-ba'i Bstan-bcos*, pp. 88a-89b.

⁵³ Kun-dga'-bsod-nams, *Sa-skya'i Gdung-rabs*, p. 144.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 145. On the dating problem for the translator of Yar-lung who worked in Kathmandu, Nepal, Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, who probably lived in the late 13th to 14th centuries, see Kvaerne, *An Anthology*, p. 2. See now Martin, 'Crystals and Images'.

⁵⁵ This work, entitled *Gnas Gsum Gsal-byed Nor-bu'i Me-long*, is found in Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje, *Responses*, pp. 327-463. Sa Pan's passage on relics was also noted by Sde-srid Sangs-rgyas-rgya-mtsho in his work, first published in 1701, on the tomb-chorten for the Fifth Dalai Lama (Sde-srid, *'Dzam-gling-rgyan-gcig*, p. 563).

⁵⁶ On Tsari, see Martin, 'For Love or Religion?', and Sorensen, *Divinity Secularized*, pp. 113-142.

⁵⁷ For his arguments, see Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta, *Sdom-pa Gsum-gyi*, pp. 65-70 (or the same passage as contained in the *Sa-skya Bka'-'bum*, vol. 5, p. 312 ff.).

⁵⁸ The passage rendered here is found in Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje, *Responses*, pp. 430,3-435.5.

⁵⁹ These four pairs of extremes are: 1. creationist positivism—cessationist nihilism. 2. eternalist positivism—apocalyptic nihilism. 3. existence positivism—nonexistence nihilism. 4. phenomenal positivism—emptiness nihilism.

⁶⁰ For this passage, see Sog-bzlog-pa, "Gsang-sngags Snga-'gyur-la," p. 427.2 ff. We have not yet been able to resolve the problem of the date of Dpal-'dzin's treatise to our satisfaction. It seems his 'circular' appeared not long after the death of Klong-chen-pa in 1363, and *Bod Rgya Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo*, vol. 3, p. 3244, gives 1400 as the year of composition. For some discussion, see Kuijp, 'Miscellanea', p. 173 (note). The dates of Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan are 1552-1624.

⁶¹ For the content and transmission of the *Bka'-gdams Glegs-bam* (or *Jo-bo Glegs-bam*), see *Two Histories*, pp. 33.6, 366.4 ff., 379.8. The present passage is also cited in Sde-srid, *'Dzam-gling-rgyan-gcig*, p. 563. An anonymous Kargyudpa work of the thirteenth century (Anon., *Gnad-kyi Them-bu*, p. 27.3) has a rather similar passage:

These are the signs that occur at the time of death—
When one has realized [the unity of] voidness and compassion,
there is a shower of flowers.
When one speaks the truth without ulterior intentions,
free of artifice, tongues occur.
When realization has stabilized, hearts occur.
When the seminal (*kun-da*) bodhicitta is stabilized,
ring-/b/srel occur.
When one has achieved stability in the generation stage,
images occur.

⁶² This refers to the Sakya teacher Gung-ru-ba Shes-rab-bzang-po (1411-1475), on whom see Jackson, *Early Abbots*, pp. 15-16.

⁶³ One should also notice in the same work by Sog-bzlog-pa (p. 504.4 ff.), some discussion about various types of *gdung* and *ring-bsrel* as signs of particular degrees of spiritual development. He cites the *Sku-gdung 'Bar-ba* as well as a commentary on the *Gsang-ba Ring-bsrel* (i.e., the *Bodhigarbhālaṃkāra*) by Bodhibhadra (Slob-dpon Byang-chub-bzang-po). The latter citation contains a four-fold classification: 1) Remains (*sku-gdung*) relics. 2) Mustard seed like remains (*sku-gdung yung-'bru lta-bu*) relics. 3) Clothing (*sku-bal*) relics. 4) Dharmabody (Chos-kyi Sku) relics.

⁶⁴ He lived from 1445 to 1521. The best sources so far in English on the life of Padma-gling-pa are Aris, *Bhutan* (index), and Aris, *Hidden Treasures*. The full title of the work is *Kun-bzang Dgongs-pa Kun-'dus-las: Gsang Khrid-kyi Rgyab-skor: Ring-bsrel-gyi Sgrub-pa Dga'-rab-rdo-rjes Mdzad-pa*—found in Padma-gling-pa, *Rediscovered Teachings*, vol. 15, pp. 433-6.

⁶⁵ For these 'four appearances' (Vier Aufgänge), see Dargyay, 'Die Ausbildung buddhistischer Mönche in Tibet', p. 109.

⁶⁶ Yuthok, *Yuthok's Treatise*, p. 290, where the Six Good Medicinals are:

- 1) *dzá-ti* (nutmeg).
- 2) *cu-gang* (bamboo manna).
- 3) *gur-gum* (saffron).
- 4) *li-shi* (clove).
- 5) *sukmel* (lesser cardamon).
- 6) *ka-ko-la* (cardamon).

The Five Good Medicinals are the same, minus only the last.

⁶⁷ Some readers of earlier drafts of this work have objected to our use of the word 'fraudulence' in this context. It is, admittedly, problematic. We use the word to mean simply that Padma-gling-pa's procedures for making *ring-bsrel* and 'images' emerge after cremation are quite different from what the believers are led to expect. Aris (*Hidden Treasures*) has since called Padma-gling-pa (along with Ter-ton generally) a fraud, although we see little reason to dwell on this issue here.

⁶⁸ This tantra is cited under the title *Rdo-rje Thugs-mchog 'Bar-ba*. I was unable to locate any other reference to this text (although the last word 'Bar-ba does remind us of the *Sku-gdung 'Bar-ba*, mentioned elsewhere in these pages). For the text by Zhang G.yu-brag-pa, with colophon title "Bla-ma'i Sku 'Bag-la Brtan-pa'i [Brten-pa'i] Le'u," see Zhang, *Writings*, pp. 199.6-202.1 (translated passage at pp. 199.6-200.2).

⁶⁹ Gilmour, *Among the Mongols*, p. 231.

⁷⁰ The *Ma-ñi Ril-bsgrub-kyi Cho-ga 'Khyer Bde* by Lcang-skya I Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-chos-ldan (1642-1714) found in supplement to the Suzuki reprint of the *Peking Kanjur and Tanjur*, vol. 164, pp. 116-8; no. 6311. There are numerous other Tibetan texts on the practice available. There have been several studies of the Sherpa's Mani Rimdu, but the most recent and complete one is Kohn, *Mani Rimdu*.

⁷¹ My own observations of the pills themselves form the basis for the description which follows. On Mani Pellets, see Rockhill, 'Lamaist Ceremony'. This hundred year old article also contains interesting information and views about 'increasing bone'.

⁷² See, for example, Ramble, 'Status', pp. 351-353. In some cases the shock is based on gross misperceptions. I am certain that stories of coprophagy among Tibetans are, at base, travellers tales based on the alleged *appearance* of some of the

medicinal pellets dispensed by lamas and physicians, and not on any knowledge of their actual contents (I think in particular of Ekai Kawaguchi, the Japanese Tibet traveller, who repeats a traveller's story that dates back to at least the seventeenth century). Those who wish to trace the literary roots for this cultural misconception should refer to the citations supplied in Bourke, *Scatalogic*, chapter 8, 'The Ordure of the Grand Lama of Thibet.' The statements of Bourke have to be critically read in light of his scatophilia, his date, his comparativism, and his considerable lack of familiarity with things Tibetan. Much of what he says is compromised, also, by his evident confusion of 'phel-gdung with ril-bu. Bourke received a few *ma-ni ril-bu* from Rockhill, and had them analyzed by a Dr. W.M. Mew of the U.S. Army. Dr. Mew sent back the following report to Bourke dated April 18, 1889,

I have at length found time to examine the Grand Lama's ordure, and write to say that I find nothing at all remarkable in it. He had been feeding on a farinaceous diet, for I found by the microscope a large amount of undigested starch in the field, the presence of which I verified by the usual iodine test, which gave an abundant reaction.

There was also present much cellulose, or what appeared to be cellulose, from which I infer that the flour used (which was that of wheat) was of a coarse quality, and probably not made in Minnesota.

A slight reaction for biliary matter seemed to show that there was no obstruction of the bile ducts. These tests about used up the four very small pills of the Lama's ordure.

Very respectfully and sincerely yours, (signed) M.W. Mew (Bourke, *Scatalogic*, pp. 52-53).

Obviously, Bourke had already told Dr. Mew ahead of time that what he would be analyzing was 'ordure' of a Tibetan lama. There is nothing (aside from the "slight reaction for biliary matter") in Mew's *scientific* analysis to persuade us that the *ril-bu* he examined contained anything more than the flour which, as Rockhill says in a quote on the preceding page (p. 51), is the primary ingredient used in their manufacture.

It is entirely possible, however, that some *ril-bu* (the *gsang-chab ril-bu* mentioned in the appendix), might contain a hint of the urine of a highly revered lama. In recent times, disciples of certain lamas have been known to sip a little of their urine as an expression of strong devotion (see, for example, the biography of the late Geshe Rabten). Here devotion is the primary factor, not a particular fondness (or unusual aversion) for the ingestion of urine. Devotion overcomes natural aversion.

⁷³ This is not to say that many of our sub-societies do not have strong relic and saint cults. Tibetan Buddhism itself is fast forming sub-societies in North America, Europe, Australia, Taiwan, Singapore, etc. It would be interesting to know to what degree these groups preserve facets of the Tibetan relic cults.

⁷⁴ What Turner (*Image*) called "flow" (a unitive experience emerging in the course of play and worship) and what Eliade (*Cosmos*) would have described as a re-connection with mythic, primordial time. Although these types of terms and their accompanying explanations might be helpful in some sense, still they are at best partial, generalized, and therefore inadequate representations for a spectrum of possible personal experiences of the sacred(s?) which are *terribly* difficult to 'explain', or even to describe. I propose that the undefinable is best left undefined, or maybe left to define itself within its own appropriate context. That which is not defined is not therefore unknown.

⁷⁵ Anon. *Gnad-kyi Them-bu*, p. 42.4.

⁷⁶ Tibetan title: *Sku-'bum Mthong-ba-rang-grol Dkar-chag Mdor-bsdus: Don Gsal Me-long*. This work is found in Nam-mkha'-'jigs-med, *Collected Works*, vol. 4, pp. 437-59.

⁷⁷ The two defilements, or 'veils', are, according to Mahâyâna, those due to afflictive emotions (*kleśa*) and knowables (*jñeya*) which are countered by the two accumulations of Merit (*puṇya*) and Total Knowledge (*jñāna*) respectively.

⁷⁸ These eight great cemeteries are often depicted in one of the outermost circles of mandalas, restricting, but what is considered more important, permitting access.

⁷⁹ Literally, 'vessel world' (*snod-kyi 'jig-rten/ = bhājanaloka*) which contains the 'living beings world' (*bcud-kyi 'jig-rten/ = sattvaloka*). The Tibetan word *bcud* emphasizes the *vital* aspect, meaning the life essence conceived as a sort of sap. I have avoided the word 'material' (for the word *snod*), since it functions within a different dialectical framework.

⁸⁰ *Dhāraṇī* (*Gzungs*) are rather like long mantras. Usually, they are extracted from sūtra rather than tantra literature. They are used for a wide variety of purposes, some of them quite this-worldly and magical.

⁸¹ Tantras pertaining to the ninth Vehicle of the Nyingma school. *Btags-grol mthong-grol* means 'touch-liberation sight-liberation'.

⁸² *Peking Kanjur*, no. 198. It seems that all the Uṣṇīṣa deities (Uṣṇīṣavijāya and Vimaloṣṇīṣa, in particular) are intended.

⁸³ The three divisions of Inner Method Tantras (Nang Thabs-kyi Rgyud), a classification of tantras particular to the Nyingma school.

⁸⁴ A chief disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha.

⁸⁵ A famous Terton born in 1340, died 1396 (?). Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 3, p. 541.

⁸⁶ The central, rounded, part of the chorten.

⁸⁷ One of the four large chortens at Samye (Bsam-yas).

⁸⁸ Gyantse of the maps, a major trading center in southern Tibet.

⁸⁹ Perhaps the same place as the Rtsa-sgang of Roerich, *Blue Annals*, pp. 946, 948, 962-3, 965-6.

⁹⁰ This unusual word will appear again. See note 175, below.

⁹¹ The human originator of the Nyingma Ati-yoga lineages.

⁹² One of the twenty-five main Tibetan followers of Padmasambhava; Ferrari, *Mk'yen brtse's Guide*, p. 117.

⁹³ A preceding Buddha, i.e., one who preceded Śākyamuni Buddha. His relics are said to be contained in the chorten of Bodhnath (which Tibetans call Bya-rung-kha-shor), just outside of Kathmandu, Nepal.

⁹⁴ Rtsa-ri. Holy place in southern Tibet renowned for its beautiful and dangerous natural features.

⁹⁵ Gtsang-pa Rgya-ras-pa Ye-shes-rdo-rje (1161-1211 A.D.), disciple of the Gling-ras-pa who founded the Drukpa ('Brug-pa) branch of the Kargyudpa school. He 'opened' the Hidden Country of Tsari. 'Hidden countries' have been discussed *supra*.

⁹⁶ A contemporary of the author, he lived 1583-1656. See Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 3, p. 722. He was a famous Terton.

⁹⁷ A celebrated Buddha image brought to Tibet by the Chinese wife of Srong-btsan-sgam-po (reigned ca. 620-649).

⁹⁸ Note 85, above.

⁹⁹ Elixir or *bdud-rtsi* is used to render the Sanskrit *amṛta*, which literally means 'deathless'. The Tibetan word frequently refers to the transfiguration, transubstantiation, transformation or what-have-you of various disgusting substances or deluded psychological constituents (the *skandhas*, *āyatanas*, etc.) into pure and beneficial 'substances' (the *bdud-rtsi lnga* = *pañcāmṛta*) Total Knowledges (Yeshes/ = Jñāna). These alchemical denotations should be kept clear, while a literal representation of the Sanskrit word behind the Tibetan as 'deathless' could not convey this essential import. Often translated 'ambrosia', 'nectar', and so forth.

¹⁰⁰ One of the most famous Mad Saints (Smyon-pa) who lived 1455-1529. His biography was translated into French by Rolf A. Stein, and more recently, into English by Keith Dowman, and into German by Andreas Kretschmar.

¹⁰¹ Two very early Terton about whom relatively little has been written. Sangs-rgyas-bla-ma is said to be the first Terton (although here we should specify that he is said to be the earliest Terton of the Nyingma school, since Bonpo history has claims to even earlier Terton). He was active in the last half of the tenth century.

¹⁰² Another, more famous Terton who lived 1403-1478. Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 3, pp. 583-5.

¹⁰³ Two of several very famous Mad Saints active in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries. Gtsang-smyon is especially remembered as the editor of the most popular biography of Milarepa. He lived 1452-1507.

¹⁰⁴ The tenth century Indian originator of the Kargyudpa lineages.

¹⁰⁵ The fifth Karma Kargyudpa Hierarch, or Black Hat (Zhwa Nag), usually known as De-bzhin-gshegs-pa (= Tathâgata), lived from 1384 to 1415. See Roerich, *Blue Annals*, pp. 506 ff.

¹⁰⁶ A mythical bird, enemy of the snake-like *nâga* spirits.

¹⁰⁷ See Bernbaum, *The Way to Shambhala*, p. 69. The life of Lha-btsun Nam-mkha'-'jigs-med is told in Dargyay, *Rise of Esoteric*, pp. 166-9. But it is important to note that "Sikkim" should be substituted in all places where "Bhutan" is mentioned. This is a simple case of misidentification.

¹⁰⁸ Zhu-chen, *Collected Writings*, vol. 7, pp. 305-315. Full Tibetan title is *De-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i Byang-chub-chen-po'i Mchod-rten-gyi Dkar-chag: Ngo-mtshar Me-long*.

¹⁰⁹ The full name given is 'Jam-pa'i-dbyangs-bsod-nams-bzang-po-bkra-shis-grags-pa'i-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzang-po.

¹¹⁰ There is no subclassification being employed here. Bodily relics, clothing relics, and consecrated articles are all mixed together in no particular order.

¹¹¹ Sa-skya Pañdi-ta Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan (1182-1251), the famous author of books on literary and scholastic subjects (including music) who was also important in the propagation of Buddhism among the Mongols.

¹¹² This title refers to Bsod-nams-rgyal-mtshan (1312-1375), teacher of the famous Tsongkhapa and Bu-ston, as well as author of a well known history of the Tibetan dynastic period, the *Rgyal-rabs Gsal-ba'i Me-long*.

¹¹³ Images of deities or chortens made from clay and (generally) containing relics of some sort or another.

¹¹⁴ An abbot of Ngor; 'Jam-dbyangs-blo-gter-dbang-po, *Rgyud-sde Kun Btus*, vol. 1, contents page.

¹¹⁵ Thang-stong-rgyal-po Brtson-'grus-bzang-po, probably born in 1385, although his dates are problematic, is perhaps best known for his devotional works which gained popularity in all the sects and his building of chain suspension bridges.

¹¹⁶ Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 858.

¹¹⁷ Ngor Monastery (= Ngor E-wam Chos-sdings), the seat of a Sakya sub-school founded in the early fifteenth century.

¹¹⁸ He plays a part in the *Prajñāpāramitā* and other scriptures. See Roerich, *Blue Annals*, p. 938, for references. The Sanskrit form of his name is Dharmodgata.

¹¹⁹ Sa-chen Kun-dga'-snying-po (1092-1158), famous Sakya patriarch.

¹²⁰ Another important Sakya patriarch who lived from 1142 to 1182 A.D.

¹²¹ Sa-skya Lo-tstsha-ba 'Jam-dbyangs-kun-dga'-bsod-nams-grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (1485-1533). Became abbot of Sakya Monastery in 1498.

¹²² Probably refers to the person in preceding note.

¹²³ Glo-bo Mkhan-chen Bsod-nams-lhun-grub (1420-1489), well known for his commentaries on the logical and scholastic treatises of Sa-skya Paṇḍi-ta.

¹²⁴ This is probably the sixty-fourth Chairholder (Khri-pa) of Ganden Monastery (from 1789 to 1795) by the same name. See Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 6, p. 201.

¹²⁵ This larger work with the title *Gsung Thor-bu-las: Rten Gsum-gyi Dkar-chag dang Skor Tshad-kyi Rim-pa Phyogs Bkod* is found in Gung-thang-pa, *Collected Works*, vol. 10, pp. 162-191. The part actually summarized here is found on pp. 179.1-181.1.

¹²⁶ One of the largest monasteries in Amdo, Bkra-shis-'khyil.

¹²⁷ Norbu, 'Gungthangpa's Text in Colloquial Amdowa', pp. 222-4.

¹²⁸ Atiśa (d. 1054) was the most celebrated Indian Master in Tibet at the time of the Second Propagation (Phyi Dar) of Buddhism and the spiritual father of the Kadampa (Bka'-gdams-pa) school which would later be absorbed into the Gelugpa school. In the late eleventh through early thirteenth centuries, the Kadampa had a strong influence on the other sects, the Kargyudpa in particular.

¹²⁹ See note 111, above.

¹³⁰ Probably the important teacher of Tsongkhapa from Amdo usually called Don-grub-rin-chen. See Wayman, *Calming the Mind*, p. 16.

¹³¹ Lho-brag Grub-chen Nam-mkha'-rgyal-mtshan (1326-1401) was a Kadampa/Nyingma visionary, both teacher and follower of Tsongkhapa.

¹³² Rwa Lo-tstshâ-ba Rdo-rje-grags was the most famous propagator of Yamântaka tantras in the tenth to eleventh centuries. His biography is one of the most widely read classics of Tibetan literature, although it has yet to be translated.

¹³³ See note 133, above.

¹³⁴ Rgyal-tshab-rje Dar-ma-rin-chen (1364-1432) was one of the two most celebrated followers of Tsongkhapa.

¹³⁵ Mkhas-grub-rje Dge-legs-dpal-bzang (1385-1438) was the other of the two most celebrated followers of Tsongkhapa. These two are routinely placed on the left and right hand sides of Tsongkhapa in religious iconography. Mkhas-grub-rje is the author of a work translated by Lessing and Wayman, *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras*, in addition to countless other works.

¹³⁶ 'Dul-'dzin-pa is almost certainly a reference to 'Dul-'dzin Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, the disciple of Tsongkhapa.

¹³⁷ Ba-so Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1402-1473) was, like Rgyal-tshab-rje Dar-ma-rin-chen and Mkhas-grub-rje before him, a Chairholder of Ganden Monastery.

¹³⁸ This is a slightly abbreviated form of the name of Blo-bzang-chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1579-1662) who was given the title of Panchen (Pan-chen) Lama by the Great Fifth Dalai Lama. He served as abbot of both Tashilhunpo (in 1600) and Depung (in 1617). See Ferrari, *Mk'yen brtse's Guide*, p. 145.

¹³⁹ Rgyal-mtshan-seng-ge (1678-1756) was the fifty-third Chairholder of Ganden (from 1732 to 1738). See Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 6, p. 185.

¹⁴⁰ An unidentified person, evidently from the Dung-dkar Monastery in the Tromo Valley (Gro-mo Lung) in South Tibet between Sikkim and Bhutan.

¹⁴¹ Probably the abbot of Bya-khyung Monastery in Amdo who is intended here was Rtsa-ba Blo-bzang-rgyal-mtshan (1700-1785), a student of Lcang-skya (see following note). See Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 5, p. 560.

¹⁴² The Second Lcang-skya Incarnate of Peking, Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje (1717-1786), alias Ye-shes-bstan-pa'i-sgron-me. One of his biographies has been edited and summarized in Kämpfe, *Ni ma'i 'od zer*.

¹⁴³ Bka'-'gyur-ba No-mon-han. Bka'-'gyur-ba is a title used for any lama who is known to have read the entire Kanjur or one who frequently gives ritual reading authorizations (*lung*) for the Kanjur (the collection of sūtras and tantras in over a hundred volumes). Therefore, it is difficult to know which of the many such lamas of Tibet and Mongolia might be intended here.

¹⁴⁴ Not identified.

¹⁴⁵ Also called Dkon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po (1728-1791). The Second 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa incarnate, he also signed his name as Ye-shes-brtson-'grus-grags-pa'i-sde. Several of his works have been translated into English. He is especially known to Tibetan monks as author of most of the monastic textbooks (*yig-cha*) in use at the Gomang Datsang of Depung Monastery (among others). Like the other 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa incarnates, he resided primarily at Tashikhyil (note 126, above).

¹⁴⁶ Alias Khri-rgan-tshang, he was a pupil of the first 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa Incarnation.

¹⁴⁷ Not identified. All of the unidentified persons in the following text will be left unfootnoted.

¹⁴⁸ This is most certainly the Smin-gling No-mon-han Ngag-dbang-'phrin-las-rgyal-po (1678-1739), a student of Lcang-skya Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje (note 142, above). See Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 5, p. 583.

¹⁴⁹ The sixteenth Chairholder of Ganden (1473-1539). See Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 6, p. 136.

¹⁵⁰ Nam-mkha'-bzang-po was the fifty-fifth Chairholder of Ganden from 1746 until 1750 when he died. He is also known as the first Zam-tsha Incarnation.

¹⁵¹ In other words, Blo-bzang-bkra-shis, in whose memory this chorten was built.

¹⁵² This also refers back to the Blo-bzang-bkra-shis to whom the chorten was dedicated.

¹⁵³ *Ring-bsrel mam bzhi*. For these, see the chorten consecration text of Lcang-skya Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-chos-ldan mentioned below. This four-fold classification is most usual with Gelugpa writers.

¹⁵⁴ *Op. cit.*, vol. 10, p. 176.4-5.

¹⁵⁵ *Op. cit.*, vol. 10, p. 176.6. 'Urine' pellets also appear on pp. 177.1 and 183.1.

¹⁵⁶ Smṛtiśrījñāna is an important transitional figure in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. This Indian master was translating tantras in eastern Tibet when Rin-chen-bzang-po was introducing the 'new' translations in western Tibet and, so, he is considered as the last of the 'old' tantra translators.

¹⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*, vol. 10, p. 177.3, ff.

¹⁵⁸ See especially Ardussi, 'Brewing and Drinking', p. 119, for other beer making metaphors, which were quite popular in Tibet, a country with many beer drinkers.

¹⁵⁹ *Op. cit.*, vol. 10, p. 181.

¹⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, vol. 10, p. 182.1.

¹⁶¹ Full title: *Mchog-gzigs Bla-ma Dam-pa G.yung-drung-phun-tshogs-kyi Gdung-rten Dkar-chag: Lha'i Sgra Snyan*. Contained in Kong-sprul, *Collected Works*, vol. 11, pp. 321-41.

¹⁶² See E. Gene Smith's long introduction to Kong-sprul, *Kongtrul's Encyclopedia*, for the best English source on the life of Kong-sprul.

¹⁶³ Kvaerne, 'Chronological', pp. 220-221.

¹⁶⁴ Evidently the same as Rang-grol Bla-ma Rgyal-mtshan, born 1328 according to Kvaerne, 'Chronological', no. 119.

¹⁶⁵ Abbot of Sman-ri Monastery from 1810 to 1835 who lived 1785 to 1835. It was he who ordained Kong-sprul as a Bonpo monk. Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 7, p. 642.

¹⁶⁶ Lived 996-1054 A.D. (?): Kvaerne, 'Chronological', nos. 67, 76, 80.

¹⁶⁷ The text reads Chog-sgron. She is a female saint, since Khyung-za means 'wife from the Khyung clan'. Chos-sgron is a rather common woman's name. Unfortunately, I have not been able to identify her. The Khyung clan was also the clan of Kong-sprul himself.

¹⁶⁸ Born 1700, famous author and major figure in the 'New Bon' movement. See Martin, 'Bonpo Canons', for biographical material.

¹⁶⁹ In an 'extra' volume of the Suzuki reprint of the *Peking Kanjur and Tanjur* (vol. 164, pp. 83 ff.; no. 6299). This work is the subject of a short article by Jampa Kalsang called 'Grundsätzliches zur Füllung von mC'od Rten' which should be consulted for further details.

¹⁷⁰ In Lessing and Wayman, *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals*, pp. 106-107 is another three-fold classification of relics:

- 1) Dharmabody relics: *dhâraṇī*.
- 2) Remains (*sku-gdung*) relics: mustard seed sized relics which come from the remains.
- 3) Clothing (*sku-bal*) relics: images.

¹⁷¹ *Ring-bsrel Lnga'i Gzhugs Tshul Lag-len: Tshogs Gnyis Rgya-mtsho*. Found in *Gzungs 'Bul Lag-len*, pp. 225-309. 'Bri-gung Rig-'dzin was a Drikung ('Bri-gung) Kargyudpa who held many Nyingma lineages. He was also considered to be a Tertön.

¹⁷² *Peking Kanjur*, no. 998. This and a few other short, closely related sūtras, were the subjects of Bentor, 'Miniature Stūpas, Images and Relics'.

¹⁷³ The concept of Dharmabody (Dharmakāya) is a very important one. In this context, it may suffice to say that the 'Dharma' that is incorporated includes both the Word of the Buddha (including scriptures) and the 'phenomenon' of the world. These two are identical from a devotional point of view, since everything that is of any substance in the universe is found in scripture, and everything that is found in scripture is found in reality.

¹⁷⁴ 'Phags-pa gsum. This refers to: 1) Hearers. 2) Solitary Realizers. 3) Bodhisattvas who have reached the Stage of Direct Vision (Mthong Lam/Darśana-mārga) according to the Mahāyāna's generally accepted doctrine of the Five Staged Path derived from the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* (itself based on the *Prajñāpāramitā*)

and associated literature. This is the technical meaning of 'saint' (*'phags-pa/ = ārya*) in Tibetan Buddhism, although the relevance of this technical meaning for the popular recognition of saints is at the very least problematic.

¹⁷⁵ This list differs slightly from the list in the third chapter of the *Sku-gdung 'Bar-ba* (already cited). These curious terms were evidently formed by Tibetans who falsely etymologized the loan word *sha-ri-ram* to mean 'flesh' (*sha*, in Tibetan) *ri-ram* and, on that basis formed further compounds. This cannot necessarily prove that there were no Indic terms or items behind them, although it may lend itself to that conclusion. (This point is discussed in Sde-srid, *'Dzam-gling-rgyan-gcig*, pp. 543-4.) Compare the categorization in the rediscoveries of Padma-las-'brel-rtsal (1291-1315?) called the *Mkha'-'gro Snying-thig-gi Chos-skor* (p. 70.6): *sha-ri-ram*, *chu-ri-ram*, *ba-ri-ram*, *nya-ri-ram* and *pan-rtsa-ri* (= on p. 71.3, *pan-tsa-ram*; p. 131.6, *panytsa-ram*). There are minor, not especially significant differences between this presentation of the 'signs of saintly death' and that in the *Sku-gdung 'Bar-ba*. The *Sku-gdung 'Bar-ba* as well as the *Mkha'-'gro Snying-thig* are dateable at the very latest to the time of Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa Dri-med-'od-zer (1308-1363) who was the first to publicize them. Both the seventeen tantras (of which the *Sku-gdung 'Bar-ba* is one) and the *Mkha'-'gro Snying-thig* belong to the Precepts Class (Man-ngag Sde) of the Ati-yoga Vehicle—the former as the main texts of the unbroken oral tradition (Bka'-ma), the latter as one of four cycles which represent the Rediscovered (Gter-ma) tradition of the Precepts Class. Therefore, it is nothing strange that these collections should share some common contents. For insights into the lives of Padma-las-'brel-rtsal and Klong-chen-pa, see Aris, *Hidden Treasures*, pp. 27-30.

¹⁷⁶ An excellent and highly recommended introduction to the business of Tibetan Buddhist consecration is Gyalzur and Verwey, 'Spells on the Life-Wood'. It is, however, mostly limited to the pre-consecration rituals of preparing and inserting the sacred contents. For the consecration proper, see Sharpa Tulku, 'Ritual of Consecration', and Panchen Ötöl, 'The Consecration Ritual.' Yael Bentor, has devoted her dissertation research to this topic. See Bentor, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Consecration Ritual*.

¹⁷⁷ This work, entitled *Rten-la Gzhug 'Bul-ba'i Lag-len Lugs-srol Kun Gsal Dri Bral Nor-bu Chu-shel-gyi Me-long*, is contained in Kong-sprul, *Rgya-chen Bka' Mdzod*, vol. 12, pp. 97-153 (including a few related appendices). The passage rendered here is found on pp. 101.5-102.

¹⁷⁸ See Schopen, 'Bodhigarbhālankāralakṣa', which contains a study of various problems surrounding this text and its history, which is quite complicated (evidently, to judge from Schopen's article, Kong-sprul's five-fold classification does not in fact occur in the version of the *Bodhigarbhālankāra* which he [Schopen] used; see also note 64, above). This article also has a very valuable discussion of relic classifications which should be consulted. This work, cited by Kong-sprul under the title (Rgya-nag gsar-'gyur, 'new translation [from] Chinese') *Byang-chub Snying-po Rgyan-gyi Gzungs-kyi Cho-ga Zhib-mo*, is cited also in Sde-srid, *'Dzam-gling-rgyan-gcig*. Studies of this text and the problems associated with it may be expected in the near future.

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BOOK REVIEWS

WILLIAM M. BRASHEAR, *A Mithraic Catechism from Egypt* <P. Berol. 21196>. (Tyche Supplementband) Wien: Verlag Adolf Holzhausens Nfg. 1992 (71 p.) ISBN 3-900518-07-6 (paper)

Another piece has been added to the puzzle of Mithraism. With the continuing inventorying of the Berlin papyri, excavated in Hermupolis in 1906, a small (7 × 9 cm.), lacunose fragment, written on both sides in Greek, was photographed and transcribed in the mid-seventies and dated from the 4th century A.D., but only identified in 1991 as Mithraic. Amongst language that appears to be from a “mystery” context, this Berlin papyrus (P. Berol. 21196) contains also the word *leonteion*, an uncommon word that is otherwise attested only in a Latin Mithraic inscription from Umbria. P. Berol. 21196, then, is “the first indisputably genuine Mithraic text from Greco-Roman Egypt” (16), which, on the basis of its question/answer format, Brashear identifies as a fragment from a manual of pre-initiation instruction (45-46).

Although Brashear correctly ranks the importance of P. Berol. 21196 with the graffiti in the Mithraea at Dura Europos and Santa Prisca in Rome, little conclusive can be based on such minuscule bits of text. Nevertheless, Brashear makes the most of his fragment, freely admitting, where appropriate, to informed conjecture. In addition to plates of the papyrus with a transcription and translation of its text, Brashear includes a word by word commentary, a hypothetical reconstruction of the question and answer sets, and discussions of the possible relation of this Berlin Mithraic catechism to what is known of Mithraic initiation, and to the Mithraic presence in Egypt.

Motivated by the appearance of the verb *zōnnumi*, ‘gird’, especially, ‘gird up one’s loins’, twice in this small fragment, Brashear concludes with a discussion of the literary and iconographic evidence for belts in Mithraic initiation rites. Brashear notes the use of such garments in initiation ceremonies generally, but also as a Greco-Roman reference to the zodiacal band encompassing the heavens. This zodiacal band is familiar, of course, from Mithraic iconography, especially as a frame for the ubiquitous tauroctonous scene and, theriomorphized (presumably), as the serpent(s) that encircle the leontocephaline anthropomorphs, some of which have the signs of the zodiac sculpted between the enwrapped coils; and, at least two of these “Mithraic Leos are depicted wearing loincloths.

Brashear concludes, qualifiedly, that “at least in 3rd-4th century Egypt, the adherents of Mithras, at least sometimes...donned a ceremonial *zōnē* in probable imitation of their tutelary deity’s *Himmelsgürtel*” (66).

This important and fascinating papyrus fragment raises a number of questions: Where was the Mithraeum in Hermupolis (55)? *Was* there a Mithraeum in Hermupolis (55-56)? Is the fragment under discussion even from Hermupolis (5)? Is P. Berol. 21196 a fragment from “an entire Mithraic book of ritual” (16)? In addition to its pre-initiatory instruction, might such a codex have contained canonical writings? And, does the very existence of this Egyptian fragment offer any support for the authenticity of Mithraic materials in the so-called “Mithras Liturgy” (PGM 4.475-834)? These questions may never be definitively answered—or they may. For, as Brashear assures us, numerous boxes of papyri from the Hermupolis excavations remain still unopened.

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RON G. WILLIAMS and JAMES W. BOYD, *Ritual Art and Knowledge. Aesthetic Theory and Zoroastrian Ritual*—Columbia, SC, University of South Carolina Press 1993 (XV + 200 p.) ISBN 0-87249-857-3 (hardcover) \$ 39.95.

Ron G. Williams and James W. Boyd have published a book that covers the fields of history of religions, art, philosophy and aesthetics in order to answer the questions if religious (mainly Zoroastrian) rituals have noetic functions and in which way they are modes for the discovery and expression of knowledge new to the tradition. In conclusion, their main arguments are the following ones (cf. p. 140): A ritual—like an artistic masterpiece—rewards timeless attention and those who perform the ritual repeatedly stand in the presence of its virtual power and are engaged thereby in processes of learning. The ritual is a guide for them to attain knowledge which takes precedence over the vascillations of theological doctrine, because ritual act is not only prior to theology but also more than theology’s handmaiden. For reaching these conclusions they use philosophical theories which are—as a “proof”—neatly applied to the Zoroastrian Yasna and Afrinagan ceremonies.

Like in the fine arts, ritual studies have to consider that there are different kinds of spaces: physical, meaning and virtual spaces. Together they heighten our experience of artworks and of rituals as Williams and Boyd can illustrate for the Zoroastrian Yasna ceremony; most experience is gained through virtual space. Thereby the area for the Yasna liturgy gets surrounded by "invisible walls" so that the observers of the ritual become aware of the separation between the purified realm of ritual from the remainder of the world. The same is true for the vessels and utensils, the sounds of pouring water or the reciting of Avestan or Pazand manthras, and the movements and powerful glances of the priests. All these facets of ritual performance have unifying powers that show the noetic function of Yasna ritual: the performer and participant come to know that they are engaged with the creatures of the good creation and they experience within ritual a "felt unity" (cf. p. 57).—Important for understanding ritual is also the stance towards ritual repetition. Williams and Boyd discuss two different stances (cf. p. 61sq): The stance of Th. W. Jennings stresses that ritual change is necessary for gaining knowledge while the unchangable parts of ritual have only a pedagogic function. Otherwise Dastur Kotwal from Bombay, Boyd's informant for Zoroastrian ritual performance, stresses that only the unchangable character of rituals widens the participant's and performer's knowledge and experience. Though both stances are incompatible, Williams and Boyd try to reconcile them: Jennings's argument can illuminate the historical development of rituals while Kotwal's position is the (weighty) argument from the living tradition. Both taken together can further our understanding of rituals.

Williams's and Boyd's study on Zoroastrian rituals can be rated as a very important contribution to interpret rituals and to establish a well-balanced theory of ritual. Thus the book may be recommended not only to scholars interested in Zoroastrianism, but also to the historian (and philosopher) of religions and anthropologist as well.

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS
CONGRESS AND ELECTIONS

The XVII quinquennial Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) will take place in 1995 at Mexico City (August 5th-11th). Please address all enquiries to the secretary of the association in your country which is affiliated to the International Association for the History of Religions. The second circular is being distributed during the summer of 1994 and there is still time to register for the Congress. In case of difficulty please address enquiries to: XVII Congreso Internacional de Historia de las Religiones, Av. Revolucion 4-5, Col. San Angel, Mexico 01000 D.F.

During the Congress there will be a meeting of the International Committee, with representatives of all affiliated associations worldwide. The International Committee will elect the new Executive Committee (which also serves as the Editorial Board of *Numen*) for the period 1995-2000. Arrangements for nominations are defined in the Constitution. However these arrangements will also be clearly set out in the next issue of the IAHR Bulletin, which is sent regularly to the office-bearers of all affiliated associations. The last date for the submission of nominations, by members of the International Committee, is one month prior to the Congress itself, that is, July 5th 1995.

During the Congress there will also be a meeting of the General Assembly of the IAHR, which "is composed of all members of constituent societies of the association present at that Congress" (Constitution). Consequent upon the request of the General Assembly at the XVIth Congress in 1990 in Rome, the Executive Committee and the International Committee have considered in some detail a possible change in the name of the association, and a recommendation will therefore be presented to the General Assembly in Mexico. Full details of these discussions have been made available to the office-holders of affiliated associations by means of the IAHR Bulletin.

Any general enquiries about the IAHR should be addressed to the current General Secretary, Prof. Michael Pye, FG Religionswissenschaft, Liebigstrasse 37, 35037 Marburg, Germany (Fax: (49)(0)6421 283944, E-mail: pye@mail.uni-marburg.de).

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Sigurd Hjelde, Ph.D., Professor of History of Religions at the University of Oslo. Co-editor of a Norwegian Luther translation (Oslo 1979-1983) and author of a comprehensive work on the concept of eschatology (*Das Eschaton und die Eschata*, München 1987).

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